/119 cont./

000 and bilocal groups of families. The group of families -- the
621 multiplicity of relationships permits no other designation --
431 is therefore the next smaller constituent element of the village unit; to be sure, the ceremonial gift-exchange emphasizes the subdivision of the village, in that it underlines the affiliation of the partner to one of the two other groups of families, but, on the other hand, also joins the three groups of families as common inhabitants of the same village.

It might now seem that the group of families, which appears in the gift-exchange as a functional unit, is only a chance conglomeration of nuclear families and thus of minor importance.
621 It comes into operation, however, on another decisive occasion,
166 namely, in connection with /120/ the migratory movements, which I shall sketch for you in a few words. The inhabitants of a
[361] village never remain longer than about three to four weeks in their
[342] main village, that clearing in the virgin forest with relatively permanently built houses; then they leave home for a period at least equally long, but seldom farther away than one to two days of travel, and build themselves in a favorable spot in the forest a row of small, triangular huts which are just large enough to provide room for a nuclear family, i.e., the parents and their un-
● 262 married children. The new place is chosen according to the
245 possibilities that it offers for gathering forest fruits and for hunting;
194 nevertheless economic reasons are not actually the cause for this
166 migration, for even during this period they continue to live from the very fruitful banana planting near the main village. About every ten days a group of men go and fetch additional supplies of bananas, which the Waika today use for about 90 per cent
[222] of their diet. To be sure, during this forest period they live on
[224] gathered fruits and by hunting more than they do in the main village, and we shall therefore hardly go wrong in assuming that there are involved in these short-term forest sojourns traditionally preserved reminiscences of the era of pure hunting for wild food on the part of the Waika, undoubtedly still not very far in the past.

Sarára
Pakidái

/3 cont./

On the Rio Demini, slightly below the Cachoeira (rapids) Auatsinaua, is the Indian protection post "Ajuricaba" (Ill. 1). From the mouth to that point is a six-day journey in a small boat with a four-horsepower outboard motor. On this long stretch there are only two dozen families. Fifty years ago the banks along the lower third were more densely settled than they are today. But malaria and a terrible beriberi epidemic, 1907/08, carried off the majority of the inhabitants. After the great forest fire which raged along the Demini in 1926, health conditions improved temporarily. In the most recent times a motor boat of the National Malaria Service travels up the Demini and Aracá once a year, and the palm-straw huts of the inhabitants are sprayed with DDT. Nevertheless, malaria still takes its toll. Often it also leads to a protracted liver ailment; above all, there is a lack of any kind of medication. A second scourge is tuberculosis, the cause of which, aside from the humid, hot climate, may probably be traced to the poor and unbalanced diet. It consists predominantly of manioc meal, small fish, the salted, sun-dried meat of the pirarucu, salted wild-pig meat, and, to a considerably smaller extent, birds and game, for the men generally do not have time to hunt. In addition, /4/ for rubber and palm-fiber gatherers, fruit and vegetables are practically unknown luxuries. As a result of the crowded life of the individual families and the lack of hygiene, children too are not free from tuberculosis. Moreover, mention must be made of a dangerous eye infection which often leads to blindness. This comes about because a fine dust is constantly trickling down from the palm-straw roofs of the huts, in which there are many insects, and it gets into the eyes of the people asleep in their hammocks. An infectious skin disease that causes light spots on the skin is also widespread. Worm and intestinal ailments occur frequently, as does syphilis. Finally, it is noteworthy that adults and children have very poor teeth. The reason for this may again probably be sought in the unbalanced diet, for all of the free Forest Indians who have more variety in their meals, have excellent teeth. Mortality is highest among the children, and next come the women, a relatively large number of whom die in childbirth since there is, of course, no medical assistance.

Surára
Pakidái

884 /67 cont./
86 poisonous snake of South America, which is over three meters
[302] long. The painting is supposed to help to banish the dangers that
[825] emanate from this and other poisonous snakes. As daily nourish-
[262] ment the two candidates may take only a ripe banana and half a
liter of water. After two months they are very thin and appear to
[276] be nothing but skin and bones. In order to suppress their feeling
of hunger and thirst, they constantly have the roll of tobacco
mixed with water and ashes between their lower or upper lip and
[782] teeth (see p.190). Moreover, they must blow large pinches of
[276] the snuff-powder into each other's noses several times a day in
order to make contact with the gigantic animal and plant spirits --
hekurá. Thus, they pass their training period in a regular trance-
state.

884 It is worth noting that the initiation rites of the male members
756 of the tribe take place comparatively late, and that in this way
776 all the men are gradually trained as medicine-man helpers.
Through this, the Surára chief Hewemão explained to me, they
are able to protect themselves and their families against sickness
and accidents in an emergency. If, for example, a man is
threatened along the way by a poisonous snake or a jaguar, he is
now in a position to banish the danger by calling upon the tutelary
spirits. He must never fail to thank the hekurá after a successful
hunting expedition or a good harvest, however, for otherwise he
755 would incur their anger. Even when his wife, one of his children,
[753] or a relative falls ill, he himself must first try, by means of song
and dance in which he addresses the hekurá, to hurl the sickness
back to the hostile tribe from which it was sent. Only if his efforts
remain unsuccessful may he appeal for the aid of the chief, who
is always willing and, with the help of 8-9 assistants, carries out a
great rekurá (cure). Thus, during the day /68/ or at night among
the Surára and Pakidái one frequently sees one man, or often even
several men, praying or attempting to cure a member of the
[276] family. Before that, however, they must take snuff-powder because
contact with the hekurá can be made only in a state of intoxica-
[533] tion. The songs are somewhat monotonous and are combined with
animal sounds, animal movements, such as the beating of wings,
hopping, etc.

Surára
Pakidái

/76 cont./ The
224 meat of all the animals mentioned is greatly prized. Smaller
[262] rodents, however, are regarded as decided delicacies: paca (Cuniculus paca L.) -- amutá -- and cutia (Dasyprocta aguti L.) -- tomã --, which usually are killed with dogs or driven into a hole in the ground, as well as the armadillo (Dasypodidae sp.) -- obó. The latter is killed in the following way: When the Indian has discovered an inhabitated armadillo burrow, he examines it to see whether the animal is occupying it. If this is the case, he quickly fetches dry leaves and blocks the entrance. Then he kindles a fire with his fire apparatus, which he always carries on the quiver (see p. 53), sets fire to the leaves, and, with a palm leaf, fans the smoke into the burrow. This forces the animal to come out after a few minutes, whereupon the hunter is able to kill it
[262] with an arrow or beat it to death with a stick (351). With some-

[191]

351. Caspar describes the same method for the Tuparí Indians (Caspar, 1953, p. 96 and Pl. 3).

what less relish these Indians eat the meat of the capybara (Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris Erxl.) and the various monkey species, such as, for example, the howling monkey (Alouatta sp.) -- ihró --, cuxiú-negro (Chiroptes satanas Humb.) -- uixá --, cuatá (Ateles paniscus L.) -- paxó --, and macaco-da-noite (Aotus infulatus) -- makurutamão. A great deal of skill, however, is required for monkey hunting in particular, because these animals leap from limb to limb in the crowns of tall trees and swing from one treetop to another by means of lianas. -- Feline species (352) are shot

352. Spotted jaguar (Felis onca L.) -- ihrá --, black jaguar (Panthera onca L.) -- hukumarí --, puma (Felis concolor) -- uaquearimã --, maracajá (Felis pardalis Neuw.) -- yaó.

Surára
Pakidái

/76 cont./

224 relatively infrequently, for the most part only when they stay in the vicinity of a maloka and thus constitute a danger for human
224 262 beings. Only the meat of the maracajá (Felis pardalis Neuw.) is eaten. For some hunters, however, pride in killing such animals plays a role, for finishing off a jaguar, especially the black one, gives him greater esteem. -- Snakes, which are very numerous here because of the considerable dampness, are killed with a stick. If a surucucu (Lachesis muta L.) -- pereíma -- (Surára word) -- peléma -- (Pakidái word), the largest and most dangerous poisonous snake of South America, is killed, then the joy is especially great. The head is cut off, and every family gets a piece of the snake's body, which is cooked with other meat. It has an agree-
[151] [825] able taste and reminded me of eel. The Surára and Pakidái also believe, however, that every person who has eaten the meat of a surucucu will never be bitten by any other poisonous snake. The sucuriju (Eunectes murinus) -- uaikonyá -- and the jibóia-vermelha (Epicrates cenchris) -- oatá -- are also eaten with relish. The jararaca (Lachesis sp.) -- karihirimá --, the papaova (Spilotes sp.) -- karimatá --, and the cobra-coral (Elaps corallinus Wied.) -- huamoxíke --, on the other hand, are never eaten. -- Now and then a cayman (Caiman sclerops Schneid.) -- ihuí -- or a lizard -- xaraimá -- are killed with a stick, and sometimes the hunter, but more often his dog, discovers in the forest a jabuti (Testudo tabulata Woelb.) -- totorí --, whose meat is also very tender and tasty; /77/ it does not come up to that of the water turtle, how-
[225] ever. Yet, of the numerous species which inhabit the Demini, Aracá, and their tributaries, the Surára and Pakidái catch only the perema -- talmã --, and, to be sure, they seize it in shallow water with their hands.

223 [868] Bird hunting requires special training. That is why even boys are encouraged to kill as many small birds as possible, so that later on they will be good hunters.

The following birds are most frequently hunted, on account of both their meat and their feathers: mutum (Crax sp.) -- parurí --, urumutum (Crax sp.) -- katará --, mutum cavalo (Mitu mitu L.) -- katauri --, jacamim (Psophia crepitans L.) -- nhapín --, cujubim

/77 cont./

226 c) Fishing

Fishing plays a very subordinate part, and since olden times it has been carried on, with bow and arrow, only from the river-bank. Fishing by means of poison or landing nets, weirs, and similar implements is unknown. Recently, however, these Indians [179] have now and then used fishhooks of metal (354), which were

354. They fasten these to a line of cotton or Bromelia fibers.

given them by rubber and palm-fiber gatherers, as well as by the Indian protection post on the Rio Demini. Nevertheless, this 226 262 has not substantially increased their interest in fishing, for fish simply are not among their favorite foods. Moreover, only smaller species may be eaten (355), because all the large ones have the

355. Aracu (Leporinus copelandi Steind.), piranha (Pygocentrus sp. and Serrasalmus sp.), surubim (Platystoma sp.), jandiá (Sciluridae sp.), mandi (Rhamdia sp.), curimatã (Prochilodus sp.), pescada (Gadus sp.), dourado (Salminus brevidens), tambaquí (Characinidae sp.), mandubi (Auchenipteridae sp.), anujá (Trachycoristes sp.), cuiú-cuiú (Oxidorus niger Vall.), etc.

evil breath of the river within them and thus cause sickness and other misfortune. Thus, they, of course, abhor the pirarucu (Osteoglossidae), over three meters long and the largest fresh-water fish, the dried meat of which represents practically the basic diet of the caboclo population (planters, rubber and palm-fiber gatherers), and the delicious meat of the large water-turtles is also rejected by them for this reason.

Surára
Pakidái

/80 cont./

245 Among the vegetable foods of the Surára and Pakidái,
[262] bananas, of which I found nine different varieties, occupy first place today. Of these, in turn, the most frequently cultivated is the mealy banana (Musa paradisiaca normalis; the regional caboclo population calls it pacovinha) -- kuratá -- (372).

[174]

372. With regard to its origin, Sauer writes: "The plantains and bananas (Musa paradisiaca) originated in southeastern Asia and were there bred into a great variety of seedless cultivated forms. Their presence in the New World is considered by many as due to post-Columbian introduction" /cited in English/ (Sauer, 1950, p. 526).

192 Kuratá, however, is also the general designation for all
245 bananas (373). In addition, the following special names were

[184]

373. Zerries gives the same name with regard to the Waiká (Zerries, 1956b, pp. 152, 155), and Koch-Grünberg gives the following names for the Karaiben Arekuná-Taulipang /Arecuna/: "kurá:tana," "kura:tana'," or "kuratanâ" (Koch-Grünberg, 1928, pp. 47, 268). The corresponding Xiriâna designation, namely, "kalatá:ke," is very similar (Koch-Grünberg, 1928, p. 306). This definitely proves that the banana, or at least one variety, reached the Waiká, Xiriâna, Surára, and Pakidái from Karaiben tribes. The myth concerning the origin of the banana, which the Surára chief told me (see p.249), also shows that this fruit came from the outside only in very recent times.

[174]

given me for the other eight varieties (374):

[184]

374. The Waiká, too, use very similar terms for certain varieties of bananas (Zerries, 1956b, p. 153):

/82 cont./

252 especially of the tapir, the pieces are left on the rack until they are black and as hard as bone.

[172] Smaller pieces of meat are cooked or boiled in clay vessels (392) and occasionally also in aluminum pots (393), often

[438] 392. These come from the Xiriána.

[439] 393. These are trade articles of the caboclos (planters, rubber and palm-fiber gatherers) or gifts from the Indian protection post on the Rio Demini.

together with green bananas, by the women. The pot is simply set between the burning logs. The women are very enthusiastic about my empty gasoline cans, in which they often cooked a whole cutia, paca, or monkey. Snake meat is eaten only in a cooked state. Fish are wrapped in leaves and steamed in the hot ashes.

/83/ Vegetables offer a variety of possibilities in the way of preparation. Bananas are predominantly roasted in hot ashes when they are still green, after the peeling has been removed beforehand (the taste always reminded me of a fresh roll), or cut into small pieces and boiled, in the latter case usually along with meat. A soup which is made out of ripe bananas is regarded as a special delicacy (394). Bananas are seldom eaten

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394. The banana in general and this soup in particular play an important role in the religious and social life of the Surára and Pakidái. Young men, during their training period as medicine-man helpers, must be satisfied with a banana as their daily diet (see p. 144). At the festival in memory of the dead such a soup, mixed with the bone ashes of deceased tribesmen, is drunk by the men (see p. 230). Young girls are permitted to eat banana soup as their sole

Surára
Pakidái

/83 cont./

252
262

394. (cont.)
nourishment during their first and second menstruation (see p. 142), and it represents the most important item of food for pregnant women, and for several months after confinement. Among the Tapirapé, on the other hand, where the banana also represents a basic part of the diet, parents must refrain from eating this fruit after a birth. "They believe that the child would die if they disregarded this rule" /cited in English/ (Baldus, 1956b, p. 601).

[191]

252 raw. -- The mealy, nourishing fruits of the pupunha palm are primarily boiled. Then the soup is allowed to cool and a refreshing drink is obtained in this way. Before festivals all the [415] women pour it into a large, wooden trough, which is found in every maloka, so that there will be enough on hand. By means of steaming or roasting, a solid food is also prepared from them (395). --

[114]
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395. Alexander von Humboldt, by the way designates the pupunha or pfhiguao palm as "Pfirsich-palme" /peach palm/ and praises the delicious taste of its fruit (Alexander von Humboldt, 1860, III, pp. 281 f., 300; IV, p. 145). I cannot agree with the great scholar in this, for to me it tasted like slightly bitter potatoes. Zerries, by the way, is of the same opinion (Zerries, 1956b, p. 148).

Taioba, carâ, sweet potatoes, and sweet manioc are steamed in a pot or roasted in hot ashes without being previously washed or 252 peeled. -- Bitter manioc is scraped by the women with the 412 lancet-shaped bamboo knife (see p. 118) and then grated on a rough slab of granite, for they do not have grating boards (396) (397).

[177]
[123]

396. My servant Mateus, however, made them

Surára
Pakidái

/83 cont./

262 Great popularity was also enjoyed among the Surára and Pakidái
439 by the roasted manioc flour which they occasionally obtain from the palm-fiber gatherers by barter or from the Indian protection post on the Demini as a gift. They are unable to make it themselves because they do not have the large iron pans for it.

252 Various fruits of wild plants also need special preparation. The white seeds found in the pods of the pacova-sororoca (see p. 168) must be roasted before they are eaten. The taste, by the way, corresponds exactly to roasted maize. /84/ -- The fruits of the pot-tree (see p. 168) are first boiled, for which the women particularly liked to use my empty gasoline cans, and then cut open with the knife of tortoise shell (see p. 118). They are then poured into one or more of the large plaited baskets -- uarana -- (see p. 107) and hung for four days in the water on the bank of a stream, in order to remove the bitter substances. After that they are thoroughly rubbed by the women with their feet. These fruits, to be sure, occupy only a second-rank position in the favor of the "gourmets," but at least they fill the stomach. Moreover, I was assured that in olden times, that is, before the introduction of the banana, this fruit played a much greater role in the food economy.

263 All the foods mentioned are, as a rule, eaten without spices. Only now and then do some men and women add a little of their
[123] cultivated pepper, which is roasted beforehand. Not a single tribesman developed a taste for my salt, of which I had brought along several kilograms, assuming that the Indians would be pleased about it, and they had no interest whatsoever in acquiring any of it (400).

[146] 400. The amount of salt required by the body is supplied by the wood ashes with which the tobacco roll (see p.190) is mixed.

171 This aversion to salt is also found among many other tribes,
175 and in a report as early as the sixteenth century one can read the
263 following remark: "The forest people cannot use any salt, because it makes them ill, for they are not used to it; if they eat it, they

Surára
Pakidái

/85 cont./

9. Meals and Eating Habits

264
262 In the morning the Surára and Pakidái eat very little, usually only one or two bananas or tubers roasted in the hot ashes. I often found that men and women set out to hunt or gather without having eaten anything. If they come across wild fruits on their wanderings, however, they help themselves generously. Small, light meals in the form of banana soup, roasted or steamed bananas, pupunha fruit, sweet potatoes, etc. are eaten at noon. Sometimes there are some leftovers from the meat of the day before. The main meal of the day does not take place until after sundown, by the light of the blazing fire. For at this time the whole family is usually assembled again, and the hunting booty which the man perhaps brought home in the afternoon or the products of the gathering by the women have been prepared. Everywhere one sees the men squatting beside the fire and waiting for food, which includes larger or smaller pieces of meat supplemented by vegetable fare. In front of them the women [824] have spread out a few palm leaves as an underlayer for the food. The men eat first, and they also get the best pieces of meat. When they are satisfied, the women and children may start eating. Nothing is drunk during the meal, but afterwards a palm-fruit or honey drink is enjoyed.

264 Eating is done with the hands. In one hand the Indian holds a piece of roasted or boiled meat and in the other a roasted banana, a manioc flat-cake, or something similar. Intermittently one reaches into the pot and takes out another piece or cuts it off from the wooden spit or roasting rack. [415] Soups are drunk out of gourd bowls or calabashes, just like the palm-fruit and honey drinks.

[251] If the hunters' bag was particularly good, one may observe many Indians, men, women, and children, eating all night long, for meat is preserved only before festivals. In connection with this the individual members of the family lie comfortably in their hammocks, converse, sleep a little at intervals, then fetch themselves another piece of meat from the roasting spit or rack. It is [267] astonishing what quantities they consume during such a night. On the other hand, they are also easily able to fast for a long period of time.

/85 cont./

264 There is no feeling of modesty during eating, such as Karl von den Steinen, for example, describes for the Bakaïrí /Bacairi/ (412).

412. Karl von den Steinen, 1894, p. 66.

262 On the other hand, there are food taboos for sick people, pregnant women, for girls during their first and second menstruation, and for young men in connection with their two-months' training as medicine-man helpers.

231

10. Tame Animals

As the sole, true domestic animal, there is found among the Surára and Pakidái only the dog -- hiíma. In addition, for amusement and the pleasure in animals, European cocks are kept, as well as small monkeys, porpoise-like little hamsters (Cavia leucopyga), parrots, araras, and parakeets (Conuvidae).

As for the dogs, there are two barking varieties. One resembles the German shepherd dog, while the other, which is short- /86/ haired, white or spotted, looks very much like our [437] fox terrier. Well-trained hunting dogs, with which a profitable barter trade is carried on, are very lovingly cared for and are always given plenty of food, whereas the others are sometimes neglected. Basically, however, the Indians are attached to these animals also, which may be seen by the fact that every family that owns dogs, usually one or two, has made a "dog bed" behind their fire area, that is, a sleeping place for the loyal members of the household (Ill. 30) (see p. 29). Sometimes young dogs [552] are even nursed by women. If a bitch has brought forth young, all the relatives and friends ask to be given a young one later on and, upon receiving it, immediately give it a name. It may also be of interest to point out that the Indians mentioned never whistle to their dogs. Usually they call them by name or they hiss by pressing the tip of the tongue against the teeth (413).

[171]

413. Many North American Indians behave in the same way (Friederici, 1899, p. 365).

/86 cont./

231 Dogs are never killed; they are allowed to live until they
[262] die of old age. When I asked whether dog meat was ever eaten
in former times, men and women, with horrified faces, answered
in the negative. Yet this custom is supposed to have prevailed
[973] at one time among various tribes of Guiana (414). There do not

414. Alexander von Humboldt, 1860, IV, p. 189.

seem to be any myths about dogs.

123 I should also like to mention that during my months-long,
231 extremely friendly stay with the Surára and Pakidái, and in
[114] spite of great efforts, in which the Indians helped me, I never
231 succeeded in winning the affection of their dogs. It meant a
[114] good deal that in time I was tolerated by them. I can agree
perfectly with Friederici when he writes: "The Indian dog has always hated the white man, and, conversely, the dog of the European, the Indian. The odors given off by the races are so different that even a human nose can usually tell the difference, how much more a dog. If a white man walked through an Indian camp he usually had a whole pack of growling and teeth-baring dogs behind him" (415). But I also found that the opposite was

415. Friederici, 1899, p. 365.

true. The dogs kept at the Indian protection post Ajuricaba on the middle Demini, mongrels of the most diverse breeds, but among them also former Indian dogs, behaved, in their hatred, as though they were mad when Pakidái families came to visit (416).

[191]

416. Baldus, on the occasion of his Chaco expedition, also observed that Indian dogs, once they are in the hands of whites, become the bitterest enemies of their former masters (Baldus, 1931, p. 18).

Surára
Pakidái

/87 cont./

235 also give names; they are fed by the women. During the day they
[552] run around freely, and at night they are confined in a common pen built out of thin trunks and sticks beside each maloka. When the tribe is traveling, it is the duty of the small boys to carry a rooster in the plaited carrying basket made from the bast strips of the curauá plant (see p. 106). When a temporary camp is set up in the afternoon, the cocks are set free. During the night they rest on the limbs of low trees, usually in the vicinity of their owners. Before the march is resumed the next morning, they are caught again and put in the baskets of the boys. I might also mention
[825] that the Surára and Pakidái never kill a cock, for it is a member of the household, and they believe furthermore that roosters
[262] and hens are unclean animals that eat any kind of filth. For this reason, eating their meat, including the eggs, would be very harmful for human beings (424).

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424. Among various Karaiben /Carib/ and Aruak /Arawak/ tribes of Guiana, where many chickens are kept, neither the meat nor the eggs are eaten (Im Thurn, 1883, p. 265). Ehrenreich reports the same thing about the Karajá /Caraja/: "Even the domestic hen, which reached the Araguaya /Araguaia/ tribes a long time ago in the domestic state and has multiplied tremendously, is, as a member of the household, not used for food, nor are its eggs. In modern times, however, it serves as a trade item in dealings with travelers, who sell the poultry in the first settlements of the province of Para at a high profit" (Ehrenreich, 1891, pp. 13/14).

231

[171] The tamed wild animals, such as monkeys, parrots, araras, and parakeets, also enjoy complete freedom. I never found them tied up, as is mentioned by Baldus, for example, for the Chaco tribes (425).

425. Baldus, 1931, p. 18.

Surára
Pakidái

/106 cont./

769
266 On the next day, April 6, 1956, the festival reached its climax. Toward 9:00 the Surára chief, his brother Kurikayawõ, and the chief and war chief of the Pakidái sat down around the pots of banana soup, in front of which also stood the two jamaru vessels with the bone ashes of the deceased, and all the other [533] male members of the tribe sat around them. The Surára chief started to pray loudly, whereupon a rather long choral song was struck up. Then he poured the bone ashes into all the soup pots, mixed them thoroughly with his hands, and scooped out a calabash full for himself, which he emptied hastily and to the last drop. Thereupon the Pakidái chief, the brother of Hewemão, and the war chiefs of both tribes drank, followed by all the older and younger men, including the larger boys, who drank last (514). As a result of this ceremonial drinking of the

[123] ~ 514. Hewemão also offered my servant and me a full calabash each, along with the war chiefs. When we had drunk them, he slapped our backs appreciatively and said that we were now true Sarára.

bone ashes, it is believed, the strength and spirit of the de-
769 ceased will remain within the tribe and contribute to its vigor.
[533] Following this drink, a prayer of thanksgiving was sung.
[782] Then the men, youths, and boys together ate large quantities
/107/ of the roasted tapir meat, as well as manioc flat-cakes,
● [262] and after that the women handed them calabashes full of the refreshing drink made of pupunha fruits.

Invigorated and fortified with the powers of the deceased, the men were now able to proceed with the most strenuous part
[302] of the festival. But before this began, half of them blackened their faces and bodies with soot, which they scraped off of their
769 cooking pots. Meanwhile others had again set in the center of
276 the maloka circle the large clay plate upon which they poured the brownish snuff-powder -- epená --, out of bamboo containers, and in front of the plate they laid a large number of

/107 cont./

769 526 [622] [624] [147] in his place. The wife then massaged the head of the exhausted one, so that he would quickly be ready to resume. The chiefs and war chiefs in particular distinguished themselves in this type of sport. They also fought the longest, some of them with five, six, and more opponents; they had positively unbelievable strength and endurance.

These combats, in which one man always symbolically represented the good spirit, that is, a hekurá, and the other, who had smeared himself with soot, the evil spirit, a nonexí (see pp. 213 ff., 225 ff.), lasted almost two hours. After [262] that the men were completely exhausted and refreshed themselves with a new, joint meal of tapir meat and manioc flat-[276] cakes. Afterwards, however, many of the participants suffered from severe headaches brought on by the snuff-powder in connection with the inhuman physical exertion, so that many wives were obliged to massage their husbands' heads.

769 In the evening there was another half-hour procession in the maloka courtyard, when all the little jamaru vessels in which remains of bone ashes were stored were carried along. This retention of a certain amount of ashes is very important, so that the next festival in memory of the dead can be held, even though no member of the tribe /108/ dies up to that time. It could not take place without any bone ashes of deceased Surára or Pakidái.

769 114 184 If one compares this annual festival with that of the Waiká, which was described by Zerries in great detail (515), one finds

515. Zerries, 1955b, pp. 662-665.

extensive analogies in the most important phases. Zerries believes that among the Waiká it was originally a harvest festival to which other rites of various kinds were added (516).

516. Zerries, 1955b, p. 662.

For the Surára and Pakidái, on the other hand, it can definitely be said that here there are no features reminiscent of a harvest festival.

/114 cont./

539 discipline of the tribe. Since all admonitions were of no avail, he was banished from the community.

Karemoná painted his body with urucú and left the maloka. After he had wandered about in the forest for a few hours, he lay down wearily on the ground and fell asleep. While he was asleep Poré transformed him into the jibóia-vermelha (Epicrates cenchris) -- oatá -- because of his insubordination.

539
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The Creation of the Black Jaguar

The Surára were already acquainted with clearing by burning and cultivated banana trees and pupunha palms. One day they saw a large toad in the forest clearing. A Surára wanted to kill it, but it fled to the other /115/ side of the roça (forest clearing) and there turned into a black jaguar.

The Creation of the Tapir

A cuatá monkey fell from a tall tree and was unable to climb up again. After several unsuccessful attempts, it turned into a tapir.

The Creation of Wild Pigs

A band of cuxiú monkeys fell from a tall tree. After futile attempts at climbing up again they were transformed into wild pigs.

The Creation of the Ant Bear

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A Surára man who had raped his mother-in-law was turned into an ant bear by Poré as punishment. Since then there has been in-law avoidance between mother-in-law and son-in-law, and the meat of the ant bear may not be eaten by members of the tribe.

● 262

/For information on the wide variety of edible food items collected by the Yanoama, see category 222./

/200 cont./

162 C. Sanemá of the upper Ventuari (Nabudub)

Locality	No. Inhabitants	Observations
1. Weweña	50	The Nabudub of Ihuduña frequently move between the Ventuari and the Erebato.
2. Wadekuña	80	
3. Mahanaña	50	
4. Ihuduña	200	
Total	380 estimated individuals.	

161 According to this demographic estimation there are approximately 2,150 Sanemá in the zone of the upper Ventuari, Erebato, and Caura. We do not know how many Sanemá live on the Padamo.

342 We have seen four different types of houses among the Sanemá: (a) windscreen type, (b) triangular in shape and Makiritare system, (c) rectangular, and (d) oblong. We have found types (a) and (b) together in the same encampment on the Ventuari, facing Caño Mosquito.

342 On our trip through that place we saw two Sanemá rafts
361 moored on the bank of the Ventuari. We later climbed a cliff
[501] and followed a path which led us to a conuco of the Sanemá.
[137] At one end there was a gigantic algarroba tree laden with fruit.
[262] Judging from the skins scattered on the ground, we realized that the Sanemá had consumed a great quantity. Near the tree, which in times past offered them /201/ its generous shade, we found a desolate Sanemá encampment. It was made up of five
342 triangular huts and two of the windscreen type. Both types of construction seem to be typical of the Yanoama and are remarkable for their size, somewhat small. For the construction of a triangular cabin six poles 1.60 meters long are needed to serve as posts or supports. Three pairs are made out of them, each bound at the upper end with a bejuco, and with some 30 centimeters left free in order to form a fork. The lower parts of the poles are stuck into the ground at a distance of half a meter. These forks in tepee form with a separation of two meters form a
[824] regular triangle. Three sticks are later placed on the forks, and these support the roof made of platanillo /Musaceae/ leaves. A similar rancho was described by Koch-Grünberg (1923, Pl. 43).

/204 cont./

226 They also fish, but fishing takes second place and is much less important than hunting.

222 241 Other important sources of food are wild fruits and vegetables, which they frequently obtain. Many local groups devote themselves to agriculture, which they carry on in rudimentary fashion and which they adopt from their Caribe neighbors, but for many groups the products of the earth constitute at present a primary food base.

224 The men prefer to go out hunting at dawn or in the afternoon before the sun sets. During the morning they spy on the game as it comes to drink water or to look for food in the places [223] known by the hunter. In the afternoon the Sanemá hunts birds when they return to the trees to spend the night hidden among the leaves.

The men commonly go out alone, sometimes with a com- [789] panion, or in small parties. They walk with great care, without [826] making any noise, and they believe that in a moment of great danger they can develop such power in their necks that it lifts them above the ground and they fly to the height of the trees.

224 /205/ The hunters prepare themselves in various ways for 777 their work. If one of them has had bad luck, he tries to rid 826 himself of the "dark blood," the cause of his poor aim. He [237] achieves this by piercing, by means of a ray-fish sting, the muscles of the arm or by making small incisions on the forearm. [841] "Dark blood" is produced in the body of a man when a woman during menstruation touches the hunter or one of his weapons, or also when a woman in this condition has eaten any of the game hunted by him.

224 A good hunter does not eat any of his own catch in order not 262 to lose good luck or to miss when he shoots. He eats the game [779] of his companion; of the animals caught by him he only asks for the skull and the ribs, which he carefully keeps in certain places near the rancheria or in his house. They are exhibited [554] there in order to augment his prestige as a skillful hunter, on which depend many aspects of his social life, such as, for example, obtaining a second wife.

/206 cont./

223 order to pick it up. As a result of his expertness in hunting, he knows the trees in which the birds gather to spend the night. The man, using palm leaves and bejucos, carefully prepares a blind with the sure hope that, by means of this ambush, the booty will be plentiful.

224 262 [237] [482] Hunting in groups is common among the Sanemá, and they do this particularly to surround a group of monkeys, peccaries, or in order to kill a feline. /207/ They do not eat the meat of jaguars, but keep the canine teeth in the roof of the house. They tie up the peccaries that they get, front feet to the back ones, load them on their backs, and carry them home. The meat of the peccary is greatly esteemed, and the whole rancheria gathers to eat the animal, with the exception of the young unmarried men, who, by order of the capitan, must not taste the meat so that the hunters who have killed the animals will not die. They may, however, eat other kinds of meat and the food which they most like.

There are some animals that the Sanemá are prohibited from hunting: thus, they do not eat snakes, they kill the cayman, but [.766] do not sample its flesh. The Sanemá of the Erebato told us that they cremate caymans as they do men, for, in fact, as far as [784] they are concerned, caymans were previously men. It is taboo to kill a morrocoy or a turtle. They were people before and Omao 262 223 does not permit them to be killed. There are other animals which they kill and eat only under certain conditions, among them the eagle (21).

> 21. The Surará and Pakidai kill the eagle, but throw away its flesh. They say that it transmits sickness (Becher, 1960, p. 77). (Cf. the section on "death" in the present study /see pp. 93-94 /.)

223 825 262 If a hunter comes upon an eagle, he believes that he is facing a speciman of a species of animal which was previously a person. He may be facing a friend or an enemy. Therefore, before shooting, he asks the animal if it is a friend or an enemy, and only if

262 /207 cont./
223 it answers that it is an enemy is he to kill it. In the majority of
825 cases it turns out to be an enemy, and the hunter kills it with a double aim: to have meat and to cause an enemy to disappear. The hunter carries the eagle home, and his wife prepares it for
[514] food. Those who eat the meat must not defecate on the ground,
[785] but only in the water. The hunter himself must not eat any of this meat and fasts for two months. The eagle "weighs heavily" on his chest, and only when it has "gone upwards" does the hunter get better and begin to feel well again. From now on those who have eaten of the meat may live without taking the above-mentioned precautions (22).

22. See the section which deals with "war" /see p. 57 /.

825 It might be said that for every Sanemá rancheria there exists a rancheria of eagles and of hanekasá. This belief has characteristics of the idea of the alter ego, and the Sanemá apply kinship terms to these animals when they speak to them. The same occurs with regard to jaguars and other animals which they mentioned to us vaguely.

226 Fishing plays a very secondary role in the Sanemá economy.
[433] They fish with barbasco, with bow and arrow, but we have not seen special arrows for this purpose. In recent times they have adopted fishhooks, which they now use quite frequently.

222 /208/ Of secondary importance, coming after hunting, is the gathering of various kinds of small animals, insects, wild fruit,
[527] and also honey and eggs. The shoots of palms represent an important part of the diet, but above all the fruit of the pijiguao palm (Guilielma sp.), the harvest of which, during the first three months of the year, marks the time of festivities and other social
[114] activities. We were not able to gather much information from the Sanemá regarding this matter, but Barker (1953, pp. 447-48), Zerries (1955b), and Becher (1960) refer to this festive occasion in greater detail, according to their observation of it among the Waica, Pakidai, and Surara (cf. Vinci, 1959, pp. 111-118).

The first menstrual period

/215 cont./

584 881 indicates that a man may have sexual relations with the wife who was promised to him when she was still a child. Sometimes a girl will refuse to marry the man to whom she was promised as a wife, but she is afraid to conceal her first menstrual periods for mythological reasons.

881 773 In their oral literature the Sanemá tell of a very sad case which occurred in remote times because a girl concealed her first menstruation. Oineitĩb, a scrawny dwarf, found out about what had happened and caused heavy rains to fall for a period which demolished the rancheria where the girl lived. All the men died. The young girl went away to live with the neighboring group, where she was greeted with unequivocal signs of friendliness. On the very day of her arrival a man went to the river to fish, when suddenly he saw floating on the water the dead bodies of the people of the rancheria recently destroyed by the heavy rain. He immediately realized what had happened. He returned to the rancheria and killed the girl. The dwarf ate the girl and all the people who lived in the rancheria destroyed by the rain. This happens very rarely, however, which is why the dwarf is so thin.

881 [302] [262] We do not know the content of the puberty rites, but it seems that the hair is cut in the case of both sexes, and, for the boys as well as for the girls, food is limited to cassava and water, and that in small amounts. They do not eat meat. An informant 343 from the Erebato spoke to us of a special hut where the women 841 881 remain for the duration of their menstrual period. If we understood him correctly, this hut is round and dome-shaped and made of palm leaves stuck into the ground. Inside the hut there is a circle made of little sticks placed side by side, within which there are two sticks stuck into the ground one meter apart. Between these sticks is fixed a bejuco. /216/ The woman, who must not lie down during menstruation, sits down and the bejuco serves as a back support. We did not see any house of this type.

584 The arrangements for a marriage are initiated with a private discussion between the two young lovers. The boy indicates to his fiancée that he wishes to take her as his wife and says to her:

/222 cont./

793 the men learn because of the frequency with which he sings them.
773 He sings during the day, but especially at night. Suddenly he
[776] interrupts his song and flies up into the sky, where he joins other hɛwĩawán in order to sup with Omao.

The hɛwĩawán must jealously keep a certain number of
793 taboos, and on the degree of care with which he keeps them
784 depends, not only his power as a priest, but also the existence of
● [262] all his people. Thus, for example, he must not eat crabs or other animals which in reality are men to them, just like eagles, etc.

[778] Should he do this, the "weight of the dead" kills his hikuladɛ, a disaster which, in turn, causes the death, not only
[726] of the priest, but also of a large part of his congregation. For the same reason, the hɛwĩawán never takes part in war or in any combat whatsoever, because, although he is invulnerable and no arrow or club can kill him, his hikuladɛ could not bear the "weight" of a man killed by his weapons. This is the reason why each Sanemá local group relies on a special chief for wartime.

793 The hɛwĩawán, who belongs to the court of Omao more than
[776] to the Sanemá community, does not marry a specific woman.
[836] He may have sexual relations with all the unmarried women of the group, but he is completely unconcerned about them and the children. He has no duties as either husband or father.

/223/ If a hɛwĩawán dies, any woman of the group may
[776] have a son predestined to be a hɛwĩawán. No one knows which
[781] of the boys born in the period immediately after the death of a priest may be the hɛwĩawán of the future, but one day the true hɛwĩawán will return from the forest where he has met the Great Jaguar, who changed him into a priest, replacing his human flesh with other flesh more worthy of his bones, the flesh of a bat-priest.

[771] He than informs the people of what has happened, and, as that election happens shortly after the death of a priest, the new hɛwĩawán tries to take the vacant place in time, assuring, in this manner, the continuation of uninterrupted contact which the Sanemá have had with Omao generation after generation.

/225 cont./ The sanemá say that the
793 hɛwĩawán kills vultures and sparrow hawks on his travels (Becher,
825 1960, p. 96). As we have already explained in another section of this chapter, the Sanemá believe that the eagle and other birds of prey are "men" who can be killed only if they belong to an enemy tribe.

793 The hikulaɛ offers the priest the possibility of flying to the
798 house of Omao. In order that I might understand him better and
[796] not doubt his veracity, the native making the drawing fixed a
[126] propeller to the mysterious sphere. One might say that the
[795] hɛwĩawán is carrying the soul of a dead person to the house of Omao.

756 The second religious practitioner of the Sanemá is a shaman, who is called sablí. The supernatural world over which he has power is different from the world of the priest, and therefore his function is different from that of the former.

[533] In order to become a shaman, the candidate must submit to a very rigorous training under the guidance of an old sablí who knows how to sing the "Great Kɛɛ."

756 /226/ During the period of apprenticeship, which lasts
276 several weeks, the candidate takes yopo continually through a
●262 tube or simply with the hand, eats very little and only the food
515 prescribed; he does not bathe and almost does not speak. Among
123 the Waica of the Upper Orinoco I saw a group of these candidates who gave me a depressing impression since they showed prolonged suffering as a result of the consumption of the drug. We were not able to speak with them, and we were not allowed to take blood samples from them as we did with the other members of the rancheria.

756 It seems that all the men are potentially sablíes, but
533 among them there are some who are very strong and others who
974 are weak, and only the strongest ones are able to sing the "kɛɛ" well. This song is rendered by the sablí at the end of his period of instruction, when the candidates are prepared and ready to receive the híkulas, or "specific vital principles" of the species of flora and fauna, with the exception of fish. As soon as they hear the call of their master, they obey and go toward his locality, where they find the sablí candidate waiting for them to enter his

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little hand, once fashionable in Europe, would probably have made an ideal present for him.

One day, however, a boy passed in front of him, dragging a great sheaf of palm leaves. The Senator stretched out his hand to touch them, as if making sure they were of good quality.

'The Senator has touched the leaves!' I shouted to the others, and from that moment anything The Senator did marked a red-letter day in our calendar.

But at home he was not a figure of quite the same dignity. His back-scratching stick was now replaced by one of the machetes which his tribe had received in payment from us. However, his smile when he saw us again made up for everything—even for that rash behaviour when he had broken the mystic spell of his immobility by stretching out his hand to touch the palm leaves.

We treated the usual cases of worms among the children and one or two not very serious sores, and then returned to the beach, where Jean was waiting for us with Caio and Sempronio. Two days later we were once more at Llantarigña, on our way to the Uarema settlement to make a retake of some film shots we thought we had lost in our recent shipwreck.

The *mereis* were beautifully ripe on the Merevari banks, and at Llantarigña there was a gigantic tree, which Sempronio climbed like a monkey. From his perch on high he threw the fruit down to us, but not before he had sampled the best of them, chuckling and exclaiming in his delight. The *merei* is the red and fleshy fruit of the cashew nut tree. Common in tropical America, it is known on the lower Amazon as the *marañon*. Besides the juicy pulp, there is also the kernel which once freed from the bitter oil which impregnates it can be made into an excellent almond cake, as it is in Guiana.

When we had eaten our fill of these fruits, we decided to sacrifice the tree in order to re-take a scene for our film. We had been puzzling over it and so far had found no satisfactory solution. The scene called for a beautiful tree falling into still water. A tree with fiery red fruits, which would make a tremendous splash. Several Indians would then jump in after the fruits as the current began to sweep them away. This venerable *merei* tree at Llantarigña seemed ideal for the purpose, both in its structure and its position, and we worked on it with our axes for an hour, while I myself, strategically placed with the camera, waited for the big scene. But when the tree did come down the Indians were all on top of me, hurrying out of the way of its fall, so that the foreground of the picture was thick with figures dancing about in clumsy

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minutes later the two women were quietly walking home with the baby, who appeared to be dead.

While the mother goes about her normal tasks, with the child tied on her back all the time, the father stays in the hammock, absolutely motionless, eating nothing but fruit and palm-hearts—'they don't heat the blood,' Luis Antonio assured us.

Among the Guiana-Amazon Indians I have never heard of the father himself suffering from birth-pangs during this period of rest. Such reports, however, have come from travellers and observers of the Indian tribes inhabiting the southern regions of the lower Amazon. Before one can believe them one must accept a little more than the theory of the inter-relation of cause and effect. A good dose of barefaced auto-suggestion would also be needed to account for this phenomenon, and only the most undeveloped of the Indians would be capable of it.

IV

Of kindred interest, while we are on the subject of childbirth, is the organization of Indian society. It has been asked whether the pattern is patriarchal or matriarchal, and what part is played by the individual family.

If the question is limited to the Shirians, the answer is simple: they have reached no stage of organization above the rudimentary animal level. The family has the sole function of producing life and protecting it until the offspring is capable of fending for itself. Their society is not patriarchal, because the role of the family ceases where its physical functions cease, at the point where, in civilized societies, moral functions begin. Nor is the pattern matriarchal, because the women are held in a form of slavery, though the very lack of an exact social system means that they sometimes emerge from this to become the companions of the men—a state of affairs which may be regarded as more emancipated, or less.

The children of both sexes, while they are young, remain the exclusive responsibility of the women, but when the boys reach an age at which they can do without their mothers (this generally means as soon as they cease to be breast-fed) they become independent males and do not belong to anybody in particular. Up to a certain point the father is free to pick out one who may be

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any moment to fall on human beings and devour them. With us Sempronio knew no fear, and he always wore a smile. He would run round our legs like a puppy, and was always ready to do things, taking on the heaviest tasks under the worst conditions. He ate with us. He ate purposefully and he went on eating. His voracity had to be seen to be believed, when you considered his slim delicate build. He ate our rations. Then he ate the special ones which the Indians prepared for themselves, and on top of that he ate an endless number of things which with great foresight he had collected on the way: grubs, honeycomb with brood cells, honey and all, small fish, worms, birds' eggs taken from the nest, frogs, young snakes, palm hearts from young palm trees—he ate everything with rapid and relentless mastication, cooking what could be cooked on the fire, and devouring the rest raw.

When he had eaten everything he would start a regular licking of his fingers, and of the leaves which might still be wet with the juices of whatever strange meats he had wrapped in them. Then he would prepare fresh delights with the innards of any game we ourselves had cooked, adding heads, claws, wing-sinews and any other odd tit-bits he could find. With a knife he would work on them like lightning. Each little delicacy was attacked at full speed, entrails were devoured, heads were crunched right up to the beak, claws cleaned of every shred of meat. Then came the time to inspect the bones we had thrown away. He split them with a knife, and if there was any marrow he could be trusted to suck it out. Finally, after a last careful lick of each finger in turn, Sempronio, the little fellow from the Shirian metropolis of Auai, would go to roost in his hammock over the fire which wrapped him in its warm blanket of heat.

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we found traces of a big encampment: here were the forked branches with the rudimentary hammocks still slung from them. There had been fires here too, but the ashes were now cold. Bones and scraps of all sorts were scattered everywhere and in the centre of the area there was shining the great armoured back of an armadillo. This aroused everyone's curiosity, not least the Samataris'. They were probably thinking of the sumptuous banquet which this carcass had afforded, and we were very glad to see that the pangs of hunger were at that moment very real and very urgent for them, too.

The fact that the fires were cold convinced our captors that it would be a good idea to set up their own camp: there would be no likelihood tonight of catching up with the tribe that had passed this way. Things went so quietly that at times we forgot that we were prisoners: automatically we looked on the Samatari as our friends and guides, just like the Guayca Indians. But the illusion was brief: that evening we ate nothing, while our sharp-eyed hosts tucked into a mound of grubs they had collected *en route*. Then they belched their way to their hammocks, from which the odours of their further digestion wafted down.

I thought of Sempronio who had had nothing to eat either, and wondered what had happened to his panful of agouti entrails which had been left burning the night before when we were attacked. It was really the thought of all those tit-bits being burnt and wasted which stopped me going to sleep.

Next day, a little before noon, while I was watching Enrico plodding along with set jaw, sweating copiously (I might have been looking at my own image in a glass) we heard a distant howling that sounded like monkeys. No one said anything. Our march continued until the howls became more distinct; and then, confused as we were, it dawned on us that the noise was being made by men and not by monkeys at all. Still we did not stop. The sounds were still coming from a long way off. Then, rounding the bend of a stream, we sensed that it was suddenly quite near: it was as if some monster were just ahead of us, peering at us through the trees on our immediate horizon. The howling went on. It was now close at hand, coming from ground level and from the trees—a sharp, disorderly confusion of noise.

The Samatari had come to a sudden standstill. They were discussing something among themselves. Every time this happened, our alarm quickened: some dark fate was surely being prepared for us. We were all in perfect Indian file, with Enrico and I in the middle, with the Guaycas behind us and three or

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The Samatari were eating all sorts of things: there were stacks of little green bundles, which would have made the smiling Sempronio die with envy. (Where he had disappeared to, we did not know.) These provisions were piled up under tiny roofs of leaves, beside little pyramids of nuts, green fruit, varicoloured fruit, hard fruit and soft fruit. The grown-ups and children were tucking in without more ado. There were white grubs, a little on the hairy side, that had the exquisite savour of crayfish; putrid worms from the Mauritius Palm, looking like *gnocchi*; earthworms, squeezed and cleaned, their flesh the colour of loin of pork, or when they were served in heaps, rosy like spaghetti and tomato sauce. There were whole honeycombs taken from the wild bees, the cells full of brood; the look and smell of them was like rich pine-kernels;[1] bags of honey, which when mixed with water gave a cool, slightly heady drink; small snake-cutlets, like fleshy eels; gigantic Maripa Palm hearts broken into chunks, like crumbly Parmesan cheese; mounds of cut tapir meat and smoked slices of peccary, which were black as coal outside but all rosy and fragrant within, like the heart of a spring lamb. There were bundles of fish dried and toasted over the fire, which ate with something of the flavour of almond cake, though it was more exotic. . . .

The leaf-wrapped viands hovered sizzling over the flames, and the greasy savours breathed out into the night air, so that the animal-lair atmosphere of the camp was wreathed in a homely smell of cooking. But for our part there was only hunger, stretching like a wide sea whose tides beat against the fertile shore of the Samatari land, with its sweet-smelling mountains and fruit and game and its propitiation to the gods of plenty—the duly gnawed bones hung up over the fire lest the smell of them should warn off the next day's bag.

But we, in our ocean of hunger, had at least one satisfaction—our hammocks, our warm and welcoming hammocks, made of stout cloth. They swung like glorious battleships over the wretched little flotilla of the tiny Samatari contraptions.

The Samatari, whose possessions are so simple as to be almost non-existent, have three types of hammock, depending upon the resources of the country round about, since they never carry their sleeping gear with them but always improvise it on the spot, except in very special cases where the rich and great affect a snobbish luxury. The most elementary model is composed of three or four strips of the flexible bark of the Annona which is known in Guiana as

[1] Used in Indian cooking.

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open space ran a belt of rattan palms with their notoriously dangerous black spines. There were just two openings: a way in, and a way out. This was a defence work against any enemy that might come along. An aggressor had little chance of bringing off a surprise attack against the Samatari over this open ground, and if he made a frontal attack he would find 'bread for his teeth'—that is, thorns for his feet.

At night, while the Indians were all chattering heedlessly in their hammocks or sleeping the light sleep of the savage, the two gaps in the cordon were closed and the camp became a fortress difficult to storm. If they stay for several days in one place, as sometimes happens during the rainy season when they are visiting their plantations of tobacco and cane (for arrows), they will put up a palisade round the camp, on the Guayca model. This is composed of the trunks of a very tough palm, driven into the ground as close together as possible. Thus entrenched they can withstand whole days of attack from a position of strength.

In the course of our march, one Samatari not only devoured the larvae of bees, neatly excavating them from their cells in the smoked honeycomb, but every now and then he would stop at a dead tree-trunk, seamed with ant-galleries or lanes, and run his thumb and forefinger along the groove as far as possible, pressing out the damp earthy substance, which he conveyed to his mouth like some rare *bonne bouche*. Smacking his lips, he carried on until he had demolished the whole network of these arboreal thoroughfares, and the ants fled away over the surface of the tree-trunk, lamenting the cataclysm that had overtaken them.

Even we tried this ant-hill diet, but a mixture of earth and sawdust hardly appeased our hunger. Sometimes, as we crossed a stream, a few of the Samatari bent down rapidly and picked out of the water some little white stones that were soft like lumps of lime. These they chewed as they went along, apparently swallowing them. They will also eat sand, the dirty, soft, vari-coloured sand which is found with the detritus of vegetable matter thrown up on the banks of a river after a flood. For on top of all this varied diet of theirs, the Samatari are also geophagists—earth-eaters. The reason for this is probably an instinctive prompting which leads them to acquire in this way the minerals their normal food—which they eat without salt or spices—does not supply.

Our great salvation was the fruit: meat being very precious to the savages, they were unwilling to give us any, and we had no means of hunting for ourselves. The gun had simply disappeared. For the Samatari too, fruit is the main

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source of nourishment, especially at this time of the year when every variety is ripe. We were able to experiment on ourselves and try out some of the widely discussed theories of modern dietetics, which amid the general clamour set up by more or less interested parties claims to be able to discover the original fount of humanity, and to arrive at the exact diet on which man in his natural state can exist.

The fruit here was of all kinds, unlimited in quantity and of every size and shape—and there it was, high up on the trees! True, there were piles of it along the path of this victualling tour, but Enrico and I weren't allowed to touch them. So I climbed, and fought off the ants. When I reached the fruit I broke off branches—the Samatari had my machete—and threw them down to Enrico, who gathered in the treasure, though not without an immediate attack on the choicest specimens 'in case they got lost' as he put it. Then I would make a hurried descent, sliding and ripping and skinning myself, to arrive on the ground covered with pestilential insects, my heart thumping with the effort. We stuffed ourselves till our cheeks were bursting, while the Samatari looked on, laughing and shouting out the name of the fruit.

Who else has ever had the chance to study the fruits of the Amazon forests, at the same time making himself the subject of experiments to determine their nutritive value? The Samatari, who are cut off from the waters of the Orinoco by thirty-two mountains, have likewise thirty-two varieties of fruit—there must be some magic in this number. The names of them all are well known and even the tiny tots learn them almost as soon as they can say 'Mama'. Every type of fruit imaginable is represented here, from nuts to acorns, from fruits as soft as tomatoes to others as dry and hard as bone, from single berries to huge bunches, and in addition to them all, a crowning delicacy of such beauty that it has more than food value alone, the white flowering heart of the palm. There are, too, a few conspicuously choice kinds, eagerly sought after by the Indians, which furnish a really substantial food and not just a few pleasant mouthfuls.

Podoimoss, olashi, luamoshi, lahsa, sopah, monama and pukma—seven of the known fruits—are the ones that give you a meal, not merely refreshment, and they make magnificent eating.

Solituan specialized in podoimoss, gathering them as he went along, without stopping. Good as they are, these chestnuts were not much sought after by the Samatari, at least at this season when there was other fruit available which they liked better. But Solituan, who was a sensible old fellow and worldly too

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But Solituan, who was a sensible old fellow and worldly

wise, picked them and put them in a 'bag' like a big open calyx made of leaves. This chestnut is encased in a green rind, soft and spongy. He tore this off with his teeth and spat it out. The actual nut was no bigger than a billiard ball, and this he stowed away in his bag. In the evening, round a fire whose glowing ash was neatly raked to form a series of little ovens, the expatriate Samatari roasted his chestnuts, scooping them out with his bare hand when they were done. He even offered them round, if somewhat parsimoniously: the ratio was three for him and one for us.

To us, who still had our own sense of the fitness of things, it hardly seemed possible at first that humble berries and fruits of such unimpressive appearance could be of such highly nutritive value. We turned therefore to the fruit that had most eye-appeal—the ones the Indians scarcely bothered with as they went along and did not consider worth collecting for the meal at nightfall. By the Aracosa river cashew trees were plentiful, their fruits red as fire, and there was another species we hadn't seen before, orange in colour and enormous. Some of the fruits that had fallen with the weight of their ripe juice were the size of a man's fist, and to eat three or four of them gave a pleasant sense of well-being, even if it didn't last long.

The great trees must have been bearing a crop of thousands of pounds in weight, because all around the forest floor was glowing with fallen fruit and clouds of buzzing insects of every colour were busy glorifying the decay as they settled on it.

But when we had devoured our comforting quantities of these cashew fruits, some of them already over-ripe, there was a roughness on our teeth and we began to feel sick. It was now that we were ready to appreciate the wisdom of these primitive people, who left the florid purple fruits severely alone, to bury their sharp teeth in more modest-looking fare that was a good deal kinder to the human stomach.

No one can know the thrill of excitement that comes to the Samatari—and other Indians too—when they find themselves underneath a big *kehpoo* tree that brushes the waters of some little stream with the mass of its seed pods, long and round like those of the senna tree. Many such pods are used exactly like the ordinary French or kidney beans, but for this particular delicacy it is neither the bean nor the pod itself that is eaten, but the white tender pulp in which the beans are set. We ourselves found it far too sweet and sickly. But in spite of all the excitement here, we had still not come to the fruit which was thought

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worthy of being packed up and carried with us. For this purpose, *kelepoo* beans were too bulky and the white pulp over-delicate and inclined to go rotten too soon.

The *monama* and its little brother the *pukma* are the fruits that really rouse the collector's instinct in the Samatari, and they rely on these for a good part of the whole tribe's food supplies. The first time we saw them they seemed to us like olives, green when immature, brown when ripe, the rarer *pukma* being also the darker in colour. It was difficult for us to distinguish the trees that bore this fruit among all the rest, but the Samatari possess a more highly trained eye for this, and always stopped and skipped about, staring upwards through a mass of leaves that all looked alike to us. Sometimes fallen fruit on the ground gave them a clue, and they fell on it with excited cries to see how ripe it was, or, as it often proved, how worm-eaten. The youngest would be already up the tree—not the one in question, as a rule, but a neighbouring one easier to climb, from the top of which he would more easily be able to get at the fruiting branches.

Sempronio walked in silence. He was still haunted by fear. It had come as a shock to the Samatari (though they made a few jokes about it) when they learned that he was not a Guayca but a Shirian from the Canaracuni. The Valley of the Moon, to them, was the very heart of enemy territory, and had it not been for the protective magic invested in our two beards, they might easily have put him to death. After this came out, they had put him to work. The boy was pleased because this meant that he could eat. He helped them gather the food supplies, and by the time it came to eating them, he was friends with everybody and everybody was friends with him.

No Samatari could see Sempronio's smile and resist it. He displayed a prodigious agility up in the trees, even winning the admiration of those who might well have been his executioners. The *monama* soon began tumbling down and the human monkeys scrambled to collect it. None was eaten. This berry matures slowly, giving strength to the men and abundant milk to the women. Actually this is the berry of one of the Lauraceae, and has something of the tartness, the bitterness, of that aromatic shrub so reminiscent of the Mediterranean lands. But the pulp is rich and oily and sweet as butter. After a few minutes over the fire it is not only cooked through, but mashed as well; and if you are hungry during the day's march it can be eaten without being cooked at all if you hold it in your mouth for ten minutes or so, when the warmth and saliva will render it deliciously tender.

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262 There were often piles of *huamoshi* heaped up underneath trees much too big 484 and too tall for me to have climbed, even had I been dying of hunger. The *huamoshi* is a queer, oval-shaped nut with a big, woody husk enclosed in a compact mass of tiny, needle-sharp spines that resemble the crystals of certain mineral forms of asbestos. It takes some opening, but once open offers man the rich enjoyment of a soft white nut running with a creamy milk.

The consumption of these nuts sets a real problem in logistics and psychology. Transport over any distance is hampered by the exorbitant weight of the shells, a weight which the Indians with their extremely practical minds consider to be out of proportion to the food value of the nut, high though this is. But once the nuts are shelled, there are the piles of gleaming white grains, so attractive that no one can resist them and they are devoured without a thought for the mothers' milk or the strength of the children's blood. Without a doubt, this matter of the *huamoshi* represents one of the outstanding problems of the Samatari provisioning-march and still awaits a satisfactory solution.

VII

262 The difference in taste between the two races—Shirians and bearded men— comes out most emphatically in their appreciation of the various fruits. There [721] is one particular kind which the Shirians adore—in fact, deify: they will even go to war over the picking of it and those who fall on the battlefield are deemed martyrs and saints.

262 For the Shirians, Saint Carpoforo lives incarnate in the miraculous, the 272 almost mythical *lahsa*; while we, the bearded ones, would sooner identify him with the *sopah*, which is a blend of fig, strawberry and mulberry. The *lahsa* grows on the Corozo palm, one of the tallest of the palm trees, which is covered with long and terrible thorns that keep the monkeys far away from its forbidden fruit. Beneath the thorns there is a sweet liquid—palm wine. It can be obtained by lighting a fire at the base of the tree, so that all the juices collect together towards the top of the palm, near the growing part. The tree is then felled, and a little skilful surgery will drain the liquid, which ferments readily. [273] But the Samatari do not indulge in this practice: some deep and ancient wisdom, though they are scarcely conscious of it, has given them the simplest (200 possible commandment about drinking: thou shalt drink only water. Nor does

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the usefulness of the Coroso palm end here: it furnishes a hard, black wood that gives the Indians their finest bows, real masterpieces treasured with pride by their owners and only bought and sold with a great deal of ceremony.

The *lalsa* represents the Indian food-ideal. It grows in bunches up to eighty pounds or more in weight, each fruit being the size of an egg and in shape and colour not unlike a small, ripe cheese. Cooking it takes a long time. The outside is a thick starchy layer, orange-coloured and rich-tasting without being over-sweet or sickly. It is better than any of our starchy foods such as bread or potatoes or chestnuts or *gnocchi*. The whole of it is edible right down to the little stone itself. This is a kind of delicious almond which crumbles pleasantly under one's teeth and leaves nothing but an insatiable desire for more—hence its name, *lalsa*.

Lalsa can be carried: there are no doubts about this, as in the case of the huamoshi. Its golden bunches are big enough to cover up a man, and the carrier protects himself from the thorns on the branches with a good thick cushion of leaves. In the evening they are cooked, so that the grim-faced women of the tribe are able to produce their milk after all and tirelessly pass it on to the scabby, drooling mouths of their infants, who in their turn convert it into blood and yield it up to the clouds of flies and mosquitoes which wrap them round with a perpetual dark veil like an aura of evil and accursed spirits.

In recompense for its fabulous generosity, the *lalsa* tree has been accorded one great privilege that sets it apart from all the other fruit-bearing trees of the forest: it is never cut down for the easier harvesting of the crop. The fruit is brought down by some clever manipulation of a long pole, for no climber's hands and feet could withstand the thorns. If in very special circumstances the tree has to be cut down, then its upper stem is opened so that its last, secret riches can be cut out—the ten pounds of sweet, crisp, chestnut-flavoured tenderness that is its growing point, the heart. Then the tree will weep out its tears from its torn breast, tears of wine that are lost.

Certainly the tribes living nearest to the forest and the forest's deep anti-human mysteries have chosen the *lalsa* as their god of food: but we, a hybrid mixture of natural fears and supernatural thunderings, chose to set up opposite it our own saint, the yellow and most luscious *sapak*. When the marching horde reached a gnarled tree which evoked the quick cry '*Sapak!*' they flung themselves at it—such is their agility in tree-climbing that they literally seem to fling themselves up—and began a feast that reduced them to silence because

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484 they were eating so fast. The weighty mass of the fruit soon began to distend their stomachs and later on the little seeds began to settle and give rise to belching noises which had to be heard to be believed. But for all that, it was apparent that they did not take the *sopah* altogether seriously and were not able to accept the primacy which we were only too ready to award it, in the same way as some religions, while recognizing the prophets of another, will consider them inferior to their own.

This was the Samatari's attitude over the *sopah*. They held it in a very mild contempt—and it is worth noting that this contempt sprang from sources too prejudiced to be quite sincere. It is the womenfolk who put a smoke-screen round the *sopah* tree and divert their men's attention towards the *monama* and its satellites. The women cannot climb the *sopah* trees burdened with their babies on their backs, and if they left them on the ground they would be eaten alive by ants. For the women, too, there is always the risk of leaving their pendulous breasts on the thorns. Thus they are never exactly on the spot when the *sopah* fruits are being gathered and can never eat their fill because their men consider the *sopah* a divinity whose tender fleshly form cannot survive if transported. The women, therefore, mere starving gleaners on the ground, have to be content with the fallen fruit, usually the unripe and worm-eaten specimens which their menfolk have rejected. Hence their stubborn propaganda against what we considered the finest fruit in the forest.

262 The *sopah*, like all especially good things, has a flavour that cannot easily be defined: it has all the good points of other fruits, and none of the disadvantages. It is like a fig, but better than a fig—there is no skin. It is like a mulberry, but sweeter. Its flavour outdoes the strawberry, which in shape it somewhat resembles. It offers perfection to the taste-buds, a luscious, fleshly perfection which properly belongs to the sphere of the erotic.

We saw ourselves dwelling for a long, long time in these gardens of sopah and labsa, far from the arrows of the Samatari and the guns of civilized men. But this was just an empty dream. Because without an Indian to help us gather them, when we wearied of losing our blood on the trees, we should come down to eating the windfalls crawling with worms, while the monkeys made fun of us, peking us with the sopah stones—vain relics of our chosen saint.

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Our chief occupations were the louse and the

flea—the penetrating variety, *Afroamericana nigua*, which keeps everybody's feet busy in the equatorial zones of our globe every bit as effectively as the dances that originate there. Americana is not such a bad animal as his African brother, the jigger, though he is more plentiful. Indian feet are full of him, and the open craters in the horny, almost bony patches forming the ball of the foot are evidence of the constant care they take to keep open the little insects' snug lairs and prevent him from taking up permanent residence.

The eradication of lice is carried out at a family or social gathering in a spirit of mutual aid. Men and women will all sit round together in a circle making a thorough inspection of one another's thick hair till they come upon the black louse crouching there silently, like a peccary surprised in the forest, among the roots of the hairs. He is taken between two fingers and disposed of in the simplest fashion: he is eaten. The same privilege is accorded to the eggs, which like all eggs must taste delicious. The nigua can be dealt with by oneself but female collaboration is nevertheless appreciated. A soft, gentle hand—Samatari ladies have exceedingly small hands and feet—introduces a pin (presented by us) or a splinter of Corozo palm (presented by the forest) into the little nest. The white grub of this accursed insect then emerges into the light of day, but the fate reserved for it is not a human end. It is thrown to the fish, which come along in shoals for the fat tit-bit.

We had no soap, and during these halts the best we could do was to splash water over ourselves. The Samatari were not interested in following our example: rain gave them the only baths they ever took. We couldn't even swim to get clean, as we had done in the 'black water' rivers higher up, because there was danger lurking here beneath the harmless-looking surface.

The perils of tropical rivers are five in number—five major perils, that is, because the minor ones, like the amoeba and other parasites, may loom large among the fads and fancies of medical men but do not form part of the psychological baggage of the explorer.

The cayman is king of these perils. His reign is uncontested. His body may be anything up to thirteen feet long, solid and impregnable as a crest of rock. Almost equal in rank is peril number two—the anaconda or water-serpent: if the cayman is king, the anaconda is certainly queen. She is a wonderful monster, up to ten yards in length, with all the force of a hurricane. And being a reptile, the anaconda has all the virtues of the reptiles, enhanced by her aquatic habits, which make her cleaner and nobler than them all.

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But for all this bad luck, we had one undeniable stroke of good: the weather, extraordinarily enough, remained fine. We were now in April, when the dry season is at its height, but we knew that in these parts 'dry season' is a somewhat theoretical term. In some years, there just isn't one at all, and now that it was supposed to be at its height the rains might burst over our heads at any moment and reduce us to a sorry plight, on these clay hills, with hundreds of streams to cross. In fair weather the forest floor was clean, the air fresh and visibility excellent. Marching was easy, and had an excellent psychological effect.

At the first of the hills, when the track turned aside from the Aracosa banks, we came into a chaos of fallen trees. They stayed with us the whole day, all along the ridge where the path led. Enrico and I were ahead, and at one point we lost the track. Taking our bearings as best we could, we turned back, but found ourselves once more among fallen trees. The havoc must have been caused by a tornado. This is a rare phenomenon, and one we had never encountered in forest country, where the dank and the constant rain keep the atmosphere in a state of equilibrium, which tends to ward off the storm. It must have been the genuinely dry season we were enjoying which had encouraged the hurricane. We were fortunate not to have walked into the middle of it ourselves: with trees being torn up and hurled down we should have been running new and serious risks to life and limb.

For the rest of that day we were trying to find the track, keeping our direction hopefully to the north. But it was late in the afternoon before we saw the Guayca again—thanks to a shot we heard quite close. Great was our relief. The sound of Uarema's gun had raised our hopes, and when at last we caught sight of the Indians from a distance we noticed that they were carrying something wrapped in leaves. But it wasn't game. Uarema had fired at a crane, but missed it. The parcels contained honey which they had found in the tree-trunks blown down by the wind. We gave silent thanks to the storm for strewing honey in our path, as in the old myths, and that night we drank a mixture of honey and water like the warriors of long ago and ate nothing but a handful of *poloimeu* gathered on the way. Wild honey, very runny and slightly acid, is sometimes fermented already if it has been stored in the hollow trees for very long. To drink it gives one a certain alcoholic euphoria which with weak, starving men such as we were results in a state of complete prostration. We slept the clock round from dusk to dawn—twelve hours.

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Automatically we set out again on the march. And now there wasn't so much as a bird fluttering near—with the sole exception of a very small species of sparrow, an accursed bird that follows the traveller and twitters now from one tree, now from another in the opposite direction, so that before long you lose all sense of direction unless you can shut the song out of your ears.

The last camp! Before we stopped, we happened to find a *holassili* bush. This is a kind of plum. The stone is big, and there is little actual flesh on it, but the flavour is perfect. Uarema was the only one of us with enough strength left to climb the tree. Once up, he started calmly helping himself, quite oblivious of those down below. When his brothers reproached him for this, he shook down a branch or two. The Indians fell on it, devouring the fruit. Enrico and I waited, just as if we were at table, not liking to serve ourselves first. The result was that we had to go without. We couldn't believe it. And there was our dignity to consider. When they realized that we had none, we announced that we didn't eat *holassili*. It wasn't good. It upset you. Heroically, we tore ourselves away.

Our last evening brought us a novelty diet: a bunch of flowers. Sempronio went off to the stream and soon came back with armfuls of yellow flowers like the tufted ears of corn. This was the flowering plant whose leaves had been wrapped round such wonderful meat delicacies in the good old days of plenty. They were put over the fire, a bunch of three or four at a time, and toasted. When they were done, you tore off the top of the calyx and sucked at the lower part. The flavour was nothing very much, and there was very little to get your teeth into. But we were innocents at the game. This flower is the refuge of a myriad white worms a few millimetres in length, and it is these which give it its real alimentary interest. The worms are sucked out of the base of the calyx in a sweet pulp, and when a series of gurgling noises from Sempronio put us wise to this fact, we didn't hesitate for a moment to follow his example. The worms were really as sweet as butter, and if we needed any justification we could claim that they were the poor relations of protein.

XI

Our famine ended the next morning in a mighty bang which brought down a gigantic curassow. The bird, as big as a good-sized turkey, was soon roasted

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and devoured. The rumblings of Indian bellies paid deep organic tribute to a new world of flesh and blood. 123* [262]

The boats were where we had left them and the river was a little lower. Many of the rocks, green with moss, were now above water-level. The camera was there too, under its leafy roof, along with a quantity of salt, matches and some coffee-extract. The place was rather inconvenient and dirty for a bivouac and we decided to press on straight away in the hopes of reaching a hut, about two hours' journey downstream, which we had run up when we were there last.

As we reached it, however, there was a contretemps. The Indians didn't want to stop. When we asked them to land, they took no notice and went on down river. We hadn't the slightest inclination to go any further that evening, because we knew that there were no huts waiting for us between this point and the Mereyari itself—half a day's journey away. But the Guayca, by one of their mental processes which we often found unfathomable, had taken it into their heads to go on. They were Samatari-ized now, and flying the flag of rebellion. A good many times they had imposed their will on us, but now we didn't feel at all disposed to shrug our shoulders and let them get away with it. The day before they had treated us badly over the *balsaida*, but we'd been too weary and too famished then to do anything about it. But this latest attempt to tyrannize over us, however innocent the motive behind it, was the last straw. Grabbing a paddle, I smacked it into the water and brought her head round with a force that almost overturned the canoe in the swift current, making for the shore. The Guayca were flabbergasted.

'We're stopping here,' I said calmly, picking up the gun so as to be ready for any eventuality. 'Unload your stuff. . . .' Since they made no move, Enrico and I threw their arrows, bows and paddles on to the bank.

Without any further fuss, we went off to sling our hammocks under a ready and waiting roof. The Guayca stayed where they were for over an hour, shouting and muttering their complaints over our decision, but the onset of night convinced them that it might be better to join forces with us. They came along with a bewildered, sheep-like air, and slung their hammocks under the hut too. After that everything was merry and bright again, and the incident was forgotten. Our dignity had suffered somewhat in Guayca eyes during the time we were in Samatari hands, but this gave it a substantial lift. There was less likelihood now of any disconcerting pranks on the part of the Indians,

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brought the canoe shooting past us like an arrow, to finish up in the big pool, where some hard paddling brought them to the bank.

At Llantarilla we found many signs of Guayca occupation, but there was no one about. Luis Antonio urged us on, as usual, explaining that we should catch up with his people further down, at what he called 'Wide-Beach River'. As it turned out, we found them there, in a rough encampment on Samatari lines—if it hadn't been for the fact that some of the faces were half familiar, and that a few of the men were wearing loincloths of red material we had provided, we might have taken them for Samatari.

'They've come here after the fruit, because it's the dry season.' Such was Luis Antonio's explanation, but it contradicted what he had said not long before, when he had assured us that his people had crossed the river because they feared an enemy attack. 'Much war,' he had told us then. Our man had been trying to give a heroic touch to what was very simple fact: his people were out looking for provisions, they weren't on the war-path at all. But this betrayed their nomadic origin, which Uarema, who knew civilization and knew how far removed the Samatari were from it, was anxious to disclaim and conceal. He had reached that stage of sophistication where he preferred to accept and admit the barbarism of war but not that of hunger.

When we slept with the Uarema Indians that night it was just like being back among the Samatari, such was the resemblance between these tribes and so similar their behaviour. Once more we ate the sacred *sopak* and a whole series of fruits we were familiar with, and went round sampling little leaf-parcels which the Guayca, with genuine hospitality, were pleased to offer us. There was tapir, deer, lapa, guan, curassow, all sizes of fish, bananas, cassava-bread in the Makiritari style, fine pawpaws and little pineapples—the kind that burn the lips.

The effect of such abundance on us was euphoric. Did our euphoria then spread to the Indians, or was it the other way about? A general dance started, with all the old songs, but for us at any rate it was soon over. In our weak state everything began to go round and round before our eyes, and we felt slightly sick. Hashimo was grinning. He looked rather like an animal let out of its cage, as he went about talking to his kinsfolk, who were crowding round like monkeys to listen. He was making gestures towards Enrico and me, evidently telling about various incidents of our captivity. Then I shouted out, in the Samatari medicine-man's tone, and imitating his vocal effects:

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cannibalism. When someone dies in battle, or through some other violence—when he dies, that is, in the full prime of manhood—the body is cremated on a pyre and the ashes scrupulously gathered. Mixing these to a paste with water, they make a block which is wrapped in banana leaves and kept for the ceremony of the Drinking, by which they believe that the dead man's strength can enter their own bodies. Such ceremonies generally take place at large assemblies, people from neighbouring tribes also being present, and the festivities may last several days. Our Indians, however, wanting to assure a good augury for the voyage they were about to undertake with us, had limited themselves to a shortened version of the usual ceremony, since in these particular circumstances there was neither the time nor the opportunity for more.

II

In three little canoes, two of them the property of Frenario's people, we went down the Yevarehuri, making for the point where it is joined by a slightly smaller, darker stream flowing from the south—the Matahuri. It had been raining ceaselessly for days and the rivers were overflowing their banks, which made it difficult to find a camping-place for the night.

On the second day we had two fair-sized falls to negotiate. The third day's paddling brought us to the Marahuri, but we left it to the right of us, its mouth being apparently quite blocked by fallen trees, and entered a smaller stream just to the south of it, which offered quiet water and a clearly defined course between the giant vegetation of both banks. The Shirians told us that this new waterway was called the Toroli—that is, the Turtle—and that we had only to go up to the source to find the track crossing the cordillera which led to the north side of the Upper Parima river.

Our crew was hardly sufficient and progress was exasperatingly slow. Happily, there was plenty of game. Guans and curassow were plentiful, as well as monkeys and sloths—the Indians' favourite dish.

Our head man was a real lead-swinger. From the first day onwards he complained of a pain in his foot which made him draw the line at heavy work. Under the drenching rains that fell with every interminable afternoon, he would sit in the middle of the canoe, and also in the middle of the bananas we were carrying, holding a palm frond over his head. If we urged him to do

/441 cont./

Obtaining Food

224 Hunting.

Hunting is done with bows and arrows.

A broad arrow-point of bamboo is used against larger land game, such as the danta, the váquiros /peccaries/, and the large [411] rodents. Poisoned points are used against monkeys and occasionally against dantas. Bone points are used principally to hunt birds. Small birds are hunted with arrows with a blunt point or forked point.

[231] Dogs are used in hunting, and in the case of the smallest wild pigs, these dogs frequently do more killing than the hunters.

The hunters hunt together and surround the game. The one who succeeds in killing it is the owner of the animal. He might make a gift of a few pieces to those who have helped him, but in general he carries the entire animal to his house, where it is cooked. A danta, of course, must be divided up on the spot in order to be transported.

• 262 Almost all the mammals are eaten, felines being the principal exception. A few snakes are eaten; others are not. The babilla /an amphidious reptile/ is also eaten. Birds of prey, such as hawks, eagles, vultures, and turkey buzzards and others, are not eaten. Almost all the other birds are eaten, even the little humming birds.

/442/ Meat is considered an essential part of the diet and perhaps occupies the second place of importance after platanos.

226 Fishing.

Several types of toxins are used to poison fish in the small currents of water. One of these is a bejuco. Another is the shell of an edible nut with a prickly husk. Another is the bark of a certain tree of great size.

226 462 857 When the waters lower in streams and swamps (generally around the months of January and February), women and children go out armed with clubs and come back with baskets full of fish.

/442 cont./

221 462 When the larger river is low, the men wade into the current and shoot at the fish with their arrows with bone points. Then, since the arrow lacks a string with which one could pull in the fish, they must run after the game in order to finish it off with blows of the machete or club.

226 For fishing they are beginning to use hook and line with increasing skill.

● 262 Almost all species of fish and aquatic animals are eaten.

222 262 Honey.

To obtain honey, the usual method is to cut down the trunk in which the hive is found, using the ax. Nevertheless, they sometimes manage to climb it and obtain the honey without needing to knock it down. There is also a species of bee which lives in the ground, and its honey must be dug up. They possibly eat the honey of some ten or more varieties of bees.

Eggs.

The eggs of the majority of the wild birds are collected and cooked. They wrap them in leaves and place them on the embers of a wood fire. They are cooked in a short time. Some prefer to eat the eggs when /443/ the chick has begun to form. Turtle eggs are also eaten, but they are scarce, except downriver.

Insects.

Bees are eaten when they are still in the larval form in their nest. Wasps are chased away by means of a torch of dry leaves, which kills or chases away the adult wasps. Then they take down the wasp's nest, which they place for a short time over the hot embers. Roasted wasp larvae are then eaten with pleasure.

Wild fruits and seeds.

It seems that there is not a time without at least a few types of wild fruits and seed in season. Most of these are eaten raw, although a few are cooked. During its harvest, the wabu -- a large seed similar to the frijol -- can be very important, especially when other foods are scarce.

/450 cont./

252 Ripe platanas are eaten raw or are boiled and mashed in the form of a soup to be drunk. Half-ripe platanos are placed on the fire with their skin.

The fruit of the "pijiguao" is preferred boiled, although it may be cooked directly on the fire when a pot is not available.

"Sweet yuca," the "mapuey," the "ocumo," the sweet potato, and other edible roots are boiled or roasted directly over the fire.

"Bitter yuca" is pounded on a stone. The juice is squeezed out between the hands, and balls are made with the pulp, or dough, and hung in a basket in such a way that the breeze caused by the fire strikes it. The poisonous juice is preserved with strong peppers and ashes to prepare a liquid which they call "yubu," in which certain foods are dipped and eaten. The cooking of the yuca "dough" is done on a piece of broken pottery. First a layer of this yuca is spread out, being left there until it is to be eaten. This cake is not turned, but is taken off altogether in order to put another one in its place. Then the first cake is placed on top of the second one in such a way that its uncooked side is joined to the latter, and they are left to cook until both are stuck together, then being considered ready. Cakes of some 15 to 20 centimeters in diameter and from one-half to one centimeter in thickness are made in this fashion.

Fish and little birds, larvae, and certain insects are wrapped in leaves and cooked over the embers. Small pieces of meat are also frequently cooked in this fashion.

[222] A large seed in the shape of a frijol, called "wabu," is gathered and eaten. The Indians believe that this seed is poisonous, for which reason they prepare it in the following fashion. It is cooked and thinly sliced. Then it is placed in baskets and put under running water. After remaining for three or /451/ more
• [242] days under the water, it is considered edible. This seed serves as a reserve in case of a shortage of platanos in the conucos. On such an occasion the whole group moves to live in a place where there is an abundance of "wabu," until the platanos ripen.

/452 cont./

252 Women generally roast the platanos for everyone's breakfast. At noon and in the evening, everyone cooks his own platanos. To a child of seven they might give three green platanos in [866] their skins, telling him: "Here is your dinner." The child then proceeds to cook them.

264 The Guaika /Waica/ in general have abundant food and eat it with pleasure. They do not look kindly upon remains of food being left. Anyone who does not lick his bowl clean after having drunk his soup of platanos is considered a prodigal.

266 765 The mere idea of cannibalism is rejected with horror, although they do eat the pulverized bones of a cremated relative, after having kept them in a hermetically sealed gourd for about six months.

• 262 They do not eat carnivorous birds and animals, but carnivorous fish, even the caribe (piranha), are eaten with pleasure. Some [252] snakes are eaten, others not. They boil them or else they cook them wrapped in leaves upon the embers.

271 Drink, Drugs, and Excesses

The Guaika /Waica/ take extreme care concerning the water they drink. The supply of water for a settlement must be obtained upstream from all the fords which cross the stream or brook. If a Guaika finds it necessary to drink water in a place below a ford, he makes a hole in the sand of the beach and waits until water which has filtered through it gushes up. The water of the current is considered dirty, just as the water from the hole dug [415] in the beach is clean. Water is transported in gourds by the women for use in the settlement.

273 The Guaika do not prepare any alcoholic beverage.

276 Tobacco leaves are rolled up with ashes and placed in the mouth behind the lower lip. When there is a shortage of tobacco, /453/ they obtain a certain bitter root in the forest, strip the bark from it, and place it behind the lip to diminish the desire for tobacco.

/469 cont./

513 352 The third essential thing is the hammock. The Guaika must have a hammock in order to sleep at night. In his dwelling he has a cotton hammock or a hammock made of vines split longitudinally. On a hunting trip he may travel with his hammock made out of cords of vine or without carrying any. In this latter case, each night he will make a temporary hammock /470/ out of cords of bark, and, in case he stays in the same general area, he will use it for several nights. Then, in order to travel light, he will abandon this hammock of cords of bark and will go to his home, where his good hammock awaits him.

262 574 [251] The supply of food which the Guaika have is generally good and apparently quite nutritious. From time to time there is a shortage, and they do not accumulate reserves. Shortages are generally not too serious, for which reason they can usually bear the period of privation, subsisting from a neighboring settlement, which will be paid back for the visit when in its turn bad times come to it.

261 726 The complete loss of a "conuco" as a result of being constantly driven out of the area by an enemy is a quite serious matter. We observed a settlement (that of Bichaasatedi) subsisting with great difficulty for a year until its new "conuco" began to produce, after having been driven out of their former area by a hostile group (the one from Liakoatedi).

352 The Guaika do not make seats, but they rarely sit on the ground if they can avoid it. Generally they sit in a hammock or on a piece of firewood.

512 On an ordinary day the Guaika awake with the dawn. The wife prepares the roasted platanos for the whole family. Around 7:30 or 8:00 the majority of the inhabitants of the settlement go to work in the "conuco." Those who remain in the settlement in general rest the entire morning. Some few women gather in a party and go out to make firewood out of a dead tree, recently fallen. Those who work in the conuco begin to come back at noon. On the way to the settlement they bathe in the stream. After a brief rest each person roasts a few platanos for his lunch. Then, around 2:00 in the afternoon, the [276] "yopo" is prepared, and it is blown up the noses of many of the

7: Barker--64 M-5 (ca. 1951-1953) 1953 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Waica

Plate IV

302

The Guaika--women and men--shave the head, leaving only a ring of hair all around. Notice the scars on this warrior. El Platanal. (Photo. by the author.)

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516

Interior of a Guaika hut, in El Platanal. The platano is one of the principal foods in their diet. (Photo. by the author.)

/152/

574 628 721 [262] [411] The majority of those from the aldea of Bisheasetjeti accepted the invitation. They entered Liatcoatjeti, hanging their hammocks from the trees, and they were served a soup made of boiled ripe plantains. Then suddenly they were attacked with axes, machetes, and other weapons. The leaders and the oldest were attacked first, and most of them died, but many of the younger men managed to escape, dropping everything and running for their lives. The enemies who were lying in wait outside also took the same road as those who had fled from the aldea.

727 The majority of the women were captured, but at the first opportunity all of the older ones escaped and returned to Bisheasetjeti. But the younger girls were afraid to run away, and for that reason most of them are now the wives of the men of Liacoatjeti or of their friends.

628 731 [499] The aldea of Majecototjeti (Platanal) was short of food. They constructed a bridge over the Orinoco and crossed it to make a visit to Bisheasetjeti and stay until their own farms might be able to produce more food. The people of Majecototjeti came to Bisheasetjeti just at the moment when those who had managed to escape were arriving and reassembling.

628 411 721 A messenger was sent to Yabitjaotjeti for arrows, and about six or seven boys from Yabitjaotjeti came with him, each one carrying a large bundle of darts /dardos, darts, lances/. These were quickly put together and their points put on. Bisheasetjeti was rearmed, and Majecototjeti better armed than before and ready to attack. The site of the aldea of Bisheasetjeti was abandoned at this time, for fear that the enemies might follow them to it. Both aldeas lived on what was produced by that of the Majecotatjeti /sic/. They crossed the Orinoco every three days to obtain a load of bananas from the farm located on the north bank.

166 722 628

One of the times when they came to get food, they found that the river had carried off the bridge. No one had a boat, and they could not cross. About three days later the men of Majecototjeti returned to the river and built their houses on the cleared place of the aldea. Meanwhile they lived in the forest near there. One day, that is to say after the aldea was ready,

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9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Waica

supple wood and well over six feet long, it is very powerful. With it the Waïka can shoot an arrow more than a hundred yards and can hit a *paujil*—a bird about the size of a turkey—at forty yards. Normally two or three arrows are carried and they are as long as, if not longer than, the bow itself. The shafts are made of reed which, Cardona said, is specially grown for the purpose on their plantations, and are feathered by falcon's feathers. The feathers are meticulously tied in a near-perfect spiral with thread of forest cotton or morisco palm fibre. Each arrow has a different head specially adapted to a particular purpose. Spare arrow-heads are carried in a quiver in which also is carried fire-making material to protect it from the damp.

The quiver is a simple bamboo case to which are also tied a firestick and a number of little knives made from the incisors of a large rodent called a capybara. It is carried on the back by means of a string slung round the forehead.

Such comprise the simple impedimenta of the Waïka on his journeys through the forest. The women, who accompany their mates on their many ceaseless wanderings, presumably have their own burdens to carry, but we saw nothing of them until we visited our first native village on the next day.

As we went up-river we came across the remains of a rude bridge which had formerly spanned the two hundred yards of river and which had been carried away by the flood waters. It was the biggest bridge we had seen although we had passed a number of lesser ones fashioned of lianas spanning the tributaries. On the bank where the bridge had been were some twenty natives and a handful of children.

"*Apo! Shori! Apo!*" they greeted us.

We knew from Butrón that, though his men were accustomed to replenish their banana stocks at this place, they had so far never been allowed to visit the village hidden somewhere in the forest.

The Waïka lives on wild fruits, fish, meat and the produce of plantations adjacent to his villages. Most of his time he spends wandering in the forest and his fleeting appearances at his village occur usually only when natural resources fail or when he has to defend himself against an enemy horde. He knows

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

his jungle intimately—where to find palm dates, cocoa and brazil nuts in their season, and where game birds are most plentifully found. He hunts the herds of peccary, his ear, versed in all the sounds of the forest, detecting his prey before they detect him. When the water in the rivers is low he shoots his fish with arrows and when the sand banks are uncovered he hunts tortoise eggs buried in the sand. His interminable wanderings are limited only by his forest lore; he lives only for the day, his sole reserve of food being a small store of bananas brought from the village plantation.

Platanal

As we closed the shore our reception was tumultuous. From the high bank above us the Indians leaped yelling into the water and clambered on board, shaking themselves like wet dogs. Laughing and gesticulating they took hold of our mooring lines. Though some of us were a little overcome by this display of exuberance, Butrón was not in the least disconcerted. He knew that the Indians had long learned to associate him with machetes and *manioc*. As soon as it was possible to do so, Butrón had a basket of *manioc* and a dozen machetes carried ashore, and the Indians who had already begun to ransack our cargo left it and hurried ashore.

"*Shori! Manioco! Oji!*" they cried striking their bellies. They jostled round the basket, stuffing handfuls of the coarse flour into their mouths, their heads thrown back in ecstasy.

As the Waïka have no knowledge of contriving the simplest of iron tools, or of grinding *manioc*, all such articles were highly valued objects of barter. So were matches, once they had been shown how to use them.

Butrón told them we wanted the large green bananas which are eaten cooked; the accepted tariff is three hands of bananas for one machete. Before long, we heard some of the natives making merry in the plantation, and made as if to follow them. But at once the others became suspicious and gestured to us to return to the river bank. We insisted and they became menacing, finally refusing to go on gathering the bananas if we did not desist.

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18
Waica

Barker told us that it was no more than a temporary stopping-place on one of the jungle trails, no family ever remaining for more than a week. And so we found on our various return visits. The inhabitants were always different and their numbers varied considerably. Barker could not tell us how frequently these villages occur in the forests. He said he had been to only one other during his seven months' stay.

Every home possesses two or three calabashes, gourds and baskets, all dyed with ochre and some decorated with macaw or toucan feathers. All such objects of daily use have loops of string tied to them by which they can be hung from the hut's roof. Each family also has its little knives of capybara teeth. Firesticks are kept carefully packed away to keep them dry during disuse, as fire is always available from glowing embers that are never allowed to go out. We saw a number of baskets which women carry on their backs, but could not discover what they were used to carry—probably household utensils in the course of their journeyings. I could find no Waïka musical instrument, but in one hut, the only one with no hammock in it, I came across a sort of fibre cape hanging from a beam. As this was the only garment of any sort that I saw, it may well have been a ritual robe.

In every house there was at least one fire, and joints of unskinned peccary and branches of green bananas hung from many rafters. In an unornamented earthenware jar shaped like a bell we saw a peccary's head boiling whole with all its hair and skin. In another hut a child was eating a small alligator which had been grilled on the embers.

The Waïkas do not know salt and spat out the little we gave them in disgust. We thought that perhaps the huge quid of tobacco which the men, women and children keep under their lower lips might perhaps compensate for this deficiency. As with the Guaharibos, the women make up the quids every morning, impregnating them with their own saliva before passing them on to their mates.

Barker said he had never known Waïkas to build or use any sort of river-craft—not even a raft. He told us that the

241 sweet-potatoes, bitter and sweet yucca (manioc), and two varieties of another root crop known in Venezuela as mapuey. Next in importance is the seasonal crop of peach palm fruits (pijiguao), groves of which are cultivated by the Yąnomamö. [222] Contrary to some accounts, the Yąnomamö never collect this crop from wild trees, although they do return to abandoned gardens to collect the fruit. Other economically significant crops include maize, sugar cane, papaya, pineapples, avocados, peppers and gourds. Also grown are cotton, tobacco, arrow cane, drugs, pigment (bixa), and a large assortment of plants [933] used for magical purposes only. Both their feasting practices [587] and their warfare pattern[1] stimulate the Yąnomamö to grow more [722] than they require for subsistence purposes alone.

241 361 Occasionally the gardens of a particular village may have a preponderance of yucca (manioc) and maize as compared to plantains and bananas. This is usually the result of the distance between the last occupied site and the new one; it is easier to carry seeds and cuttings of maize and yucca than the heavier plantain and banana shoots, and a village that moves any distance usually establishes its new garden largely from cuttings and seeds of these plants taken from the old [262] garden. Eventually, however, the plantains and bananas spread, and a mature garden will always have a preponderance of these crops, the preferred staple of Yąnomamö diet.

222 Wild palm fruits are important additions to the diet

[928]

[1] The Yąnomamö are occasionally obliged to take in refugee members of an allied village, and they plan their gardens accordingly.

000(lapa, Spanish).

222 The collection of small fruits, spiders, ant grubs, wild honey, crabs, mushrooms and fish also contributes variety to the Yąnomamö diet.

241 Cultivated foods contribute the greater proportion
• 260 of calories to the Yąnomamö diet, probably upwards of 85%,
[146] although this figure would vary seasonally. Again, those
(177) Yąnomamö villages living close to Makiritare settlements cultivate much more yucca (manioc) than platanos, refining it in some cases to meal as do the Makiritares. Elsewhere
[252] the Yąnomamö eat their yucca roasted or boiled or make cassave bread by a technique quite distinct from that employed by the Makiritare.

722 Yąnomamö material culture is very much attenuated by
[422] comparison with, for example, Makiritare. The Yąnomamö like to limit their possessions to an amount that is readily transported by the women, because the entire village may be obliged at any given moment to abandon its site to avoid raiders, or may be invited to a feast at another village.
[422] They do not like to leave possessions in their village when
[574] they leave it, as visitors from other villages would take them. And, their warfare pattern precludes the possibility of leaving a few people behind to guard the village, as they
[361] would be easily overwhelmed by a raiding party. When just a portion of the village leaves to visit another group, those that stay behind move into the jungle some distance from the village and live in well-concealed huts until their co-

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Clays pots and banana (plantain) peelings; preparations for a feast (described in Chapter 4). Note quantities of plantains hanging up and on the ground.

P. X ...

Mosew-teri men shooting at a wooden dummy (in hammock) in a mock raid. They left on the actual raid the next day (described in Chapter 5).

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11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1988 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

for my complicated storage process. I was able to last most of the day on *café con leche*, heavily sugared espresso coffee diluted about five to one with hot milk. I would prepare this in the evening and store it in a thermos. Frequently, my single meal was no more complicated than a can of sardines and a package of crackers. But at least two or three times a week I would do something sophisticated, like make oatmeal or boil rice and add a can of tuna fish or tomato paste to it. I even saved time by devising a water system that obviated the trips to the river. I had a few sheets of zinc roofing brought in and made a rain-water trap; I caught the water on the zinc surface, funneled it into an empty gasoline drum, and then ran a plastic hose from the drum to my hut. When the drum was exhausted in the dry season, I hired the Indians to fill it with water from the river.

I ate much less when I traveled with the Indians to visit other villages. Most of the time my travel diet consisted of roasted or boiled green plantains (see Glossary) that I obtained from the Indians, but I always carried a few cans of sardines with me in case I got lost or stayed away longer than I had planned. I found peanut butter and crackers a very nourishing food, and a simple one to prepare on trips. It was nutritious and portable, and only one tool was required to prepare the meal, a hunting knife that could be cleaned by wiping the blade on a leaf. More importantly, it was one of the few foods the Indians would let me eat in relative peace. It looked too much like animal feces to them to excite their appetites.

I once referred to the peanut butter as the dung of cattle. They found this quite repugnant. They did not know what "cattle" were, but were generally aware that I ate several canned products of such an animal. I perpetrated this myth, if for no other reason than to have some peace of mind while I ate. Fieldworkers develop strange defense mechanisms, and this was one of my own forms of adaptation. On another occasion I was eating a can of frankfurters and growing very weary of the demands of one of my guests for a share in my meal. When he asked me what I was eating, I replied: "Beef." He then asked, "What part of the animal are you eating?" to which I replied, "Guess!" He stopped asking for a share.

Meals were a problem in another way. Food sharing is important to the Yąnomamö in the context of displaying friendship. "I am hungry," is almost a form of greeting with them. I could not possibly have brought enough food with me to feed the entire village, yet they seemed not to understand this. All they could see was that I did not share my food with them at each and every meal. Nor could I enter into their system of reciprocities with respect to food; every time one of them gave me something "freely," he would dog me for months to pay him back, not with food, but with steel tools. Thus, if I accepted a plantain from someone in a different village while I was on a visit, he would most likely visit me in the future and demand a machete as payment for the time that he "fed" me. I usually reacted to these kinds of demands by giving a banana, the customary reciprocity in their culture—food for food—but this would be a disappointment for the individual who had visions of that single plantain growing into a machete over time.

Despite the fact that most of them knew I would not share my food with them at their request, some of them always showed up at my hut during mealtime. I gradually became accustomed to this and learned to ignore their persistent demands while I ate. Some of them would get angry because I failed to give in, but most of them accepted

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

it as just a peculiarity of the subhuman foreigner. When I did give in, my hut quickly filled with Indians, each demanding a sample of the food that I had given one of them. If I did not give all a share, I was that much more despicable in their eyes.

A few of them went out of their way to make my meals unpleasant, to spite me for not sharing; for example, one man arrived and watched me eat a cracker with honey on it. He immediately recognized the honey, a particularly esteemed Yąnomamö food. He knew that I would not share my tiny bottle and that it would be futile to ask. Instead, he glared at me and queried icily, "Shaki![4] What kind of animal semen are you eating on that cracker?" His question had the desired effect, and my meal ended.

Finally, there was the problem of being lonely and separated from your own kind, especially your family. I tried to overcome this by seeking personal friendships among the Indians. This only complicated the matter because all my friends simply used my confidence to gain privileged access to my cache of steel tools and trade goods, and looted me. I would be bitterly disappointed that my "friend" thought no more of me than to finesse our relationship exclusively with the intention of getting at my locked up possessions, and my depression would hit new lows every time I discovered this. The loss of the possession bothered me much less than the shock that I was, as far as most of them were concerned, nothing more than a source of desirable items; no holds were barred in relieving me of these, since I was considered something subhuman, a non-Yąnomamö.

The thing that bothered me most was the incessant, passioned, and aggressive demands the Indians made. It would become so unbearable that I would have to lock myself in my mud hut every once in a while just to escape from it: Privacy is one of Western culture's greatest achievements. But I did not want privacy for its own sake; rather, I simply had to get away from the begging. Day and night for the entire time I lived with the Yąnomamö I was plagued by such demands as: "Give me a knife, I am poor!"; "If you don't take me with you on your next trip to Widokaiya-teri I'll chop a hole in your canoe!"; "Don't point your camera at me or I'll hit you!"; "Share your food with me!"; "Take me across the river in your canoe and be quick about it!"; "Give me a cooking pot!"; "Loan me your flashlight so I can go hunting tonight!"; "Give me medicine . . . I itch all over!"; "Take us on a week-long hunting trip with your shotgun!"; and "Give me an axe or I'll break into your hut when you are away visiting and steal one!" And so I was bombarded by such demands day after day, months on end, until I could not bear to see an Indian.

It was not as difficult to become calloused to the incessant begging as it was to ignore the sense of urgency, the impassioned tone of voice, or the intimidation and aggression with which the demands were made. It was likewise difficult to adjust to the fact that the Yąnomamö refused to accept "no" for an answer until or unless it seethed with passion and intimidation—which it did after six months. Giving in to a demand always established a new threshold; the next demand would be for a bigger item or favor, and the anger of the Indians even greater if the demand was not met. I soon learned

[4] "Shaki," or, rather, "Shakiwä," is the name they gave me because they could not pronounce "Chagnon." They like to name people for some distinctive feature when possible. *Shaki* is the name of a species of noisome bee; they accumulate in large numbers around ripening bananas and make pests of themselves by eating into the fruit, showering the people below with the debris. They probably adopted this name for me because I was also a nuisance, continuously prying into their business, taking pictures of them, and, in general, being where they did not want me.

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4 feet off the ground at the rear and 6 feet off the ground at the front. Shorter sticks are then laid crossways on the major roof poles and these, in turn, covered with several layers of long, broad, wild "banana" leaves (see Glossary, under "Banana, wild"). It is quite small, but can sleep three individuals. Frequently, the traveler finds the remains of one of these houses and has merely to put a new layer of leaves on the roof to make it waterproof; occasionally, he takes a chance that it won't rain that night and does not improve the hut at all.

When the Yąnomamö settle a new area, they erect temporary villages of these crude huts and live in them until they can build a *shabono*. They also live in huts like these while they are re-roofing the old *shabono*.

The permanent village is complete when the palisade of logs is erected around its circumference. This is placed some 3 or 4 feet behind the roof, allowing space for a path around the village inside the palisade. The palisade itself is about 10 feet high and usually made of a mixture of palm and hardwood logs. It is kept in repair only when there is some reason to suspect raiders. Otherwise, people pilfer logs from it for use as firewood. The entrance to the village, as well as the palisade entrance, is covered with brush and logs at night to keep out intruders. Anyone trying to enter will inevitably make the brush move and alarm the village dogs.

FOOD AND ITS GATHERING The jungle provides numerous varieties of food, both animal and vegetable. The most commonly taken game includes several species of monkeys, two varieties of wild "turkey," two species of wild pig, armadillos, anteaters, tapir, deer, a small alligator, small rodents, and several species of smaller birds. Wild vegetable foods commonly exploited by the Yąnomamö are: palm fruits of several species, hardwood fruits, brazil nuts, tubers, and the seed pods of the feral banana. Of these, the palm fruits are by far the most significant.

These occur seasonally and, for brief periods of time, produce large quantities of fruits. Unfortunately, there is very little edible substance in each fruit, so that in order to get filled, one must eat the edible portion of enormous quantities of fruit. The Yąnomamö extensively exploit two closely related palms, *pei* and *kurushi*. The *pei* fruits are about the size of small hen's eggs and occur in large clusters, weighing 80 pounds and more, near the tops of the palm trees. The *kurushi* fruits are about half that size. The exterior portion of the fruit is a leathery shell which is peeled with the teeth. Inside there is a thin layer of very bitter, white flesh. This is chewed and sucked off. The taste resembles that of a poor grade of bath soap. Of the two, I found *kurushi* the more repugnant. My throat burned when I ate them.

Another commonly exploited palm is the *ediuwishi*. It is tangerine red in color and covered with a leather-like skin that consists of hundreds of small scales. They are about the size of large hen's eggs and resemble small hand grenades. When the fruit is dry, as, for example, when it is first cut from the tree, it is almost impossible to get the leathery scales off. The Yąnomamö overcome this difficulty by throwing the fruit bunches into water and letting them soak for several days, after which the scales can be easily scraped off with the fingernails, exposing a thin layer of yellowish, soft flesh that tastes very much like cheese. The fruits begin to ferment after they have soaked, producing a slightly pungent taste. I enjoyed eating *ediuwishi* with the Yąnomamö; the fruit was good, and the technique of eating it was very sociable. We would wade into the swamp where the fruit had been submerged and grope around in the murky water to locate it. After

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222 we had each accumulated a half bushel or so, we would then proceed to eat them. In
• 262 general, it takes a lot of work to get filled up on palm fruits.

The Yąnomamö also collect wild honey in considerable quantities. Nothing excites them more than locating a dead tree in which a swarm of bees has built a nest. They will halt everything and, if need be, spend the entire day chopping the tree down
[123] to get at the honey. When I began my fieldwork I hired about a dozen men to cut trees for me so that I could build a mud hut. They would be gone all day and return with just a few poles, demanding a full day's pay for their efforts. I decided to accompany them one day to see what they were up to. We spent the entire day wandering through the jungle, eyes glued to the tree tops above. Each time I spotted a suitable tree, they talked me out of cutting it down because "it would rot" or "it is too far away from the river." By mid-afternoon we had not cut a single tree, but had walked over a large area of jungle. Finally, one of the men shouted for the rest of us to come. All the men descended on the large, dead tree he had located, and set about chopping it down with the axes I had provided. It took about an hour to get it down. They then spent another hour chopping holes along the length of the tree trunk to get at the honey inside. When it was exposed, they gleefully tore the combs out, dunked them into the amber liquid, and gorged themselves on the larvae-filled combs. After they had eaten their fill of this, they collected a large pile of leaves and made a crude bowl. Then they stuck handfuls of leaves into the honey and squeezed them out into the leaf bowl. When they had gotten all the honey they could reach, they scoured the nest with leaves and licked them off after each plunge
[123] of the hand into the bowels of the trunk. They borrowed the aluminum kettle I had brought along and used to cook our lunch in. As we were some distance from the river
[292] and they were impatient, one of them filled the kettle with muddy water he found in a swamp a short distance away. Some of the honey from the bowl was poured into the kettle, along with dead adult bees, twigs, leaves, dirt, and several dozen larvae. They passed this around among themselves, each man drinking about a quart or so of the mead after blowing the debris off the surface in order to expose the water. The remainder
[251] of the honey was wrapped up in its leaf bowl, tightly bound with vines, and carried back
[123] to the village. On the way back to the canoe we cut a few light trees for my mud hut. They had gotten what they were looking for all day, and I managed to get a few logs. They demanded a full day's pay when we reached home. Thereafter, I paid them by the log rather than by the day.

222 Finally, several varieties of insects are collected. Perhaps the most desirable food
231 in this category is the grub of an insect that lays its eggs in the decaying pith of dead
262 palm trees. The Yąnomamö come very close to practicing "animal domestication" in their techniques of exploiting this food. They deliberately cut the palm tree down in order to provide fodder for the insect. When they cut the tree, they also eat the heart of the palm, a very delicious, crunchy vegetable that slightly resembles the taste of celery hearts. One palm we cut yielded an edible heart of about 50 pounds. After the pith has been allowed to decay for several months, it contains numerous large, fat, white grubs. The pith is dug out of the tree with sticks, broken open by hand, and the grubs extracted. Each grub is bitten behind his squirming head, and the head and intestines removed simply by pulling the body away from the teeth. If a grub gets damaged in the process of extracting it, the parts are eaten raw on the spot. A fair-sized palm tree will yield three or four pounds of grubs, some of them as large as a mouse. The grubs

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Fig. 2-6. Rerebawë climbing a rasha *tree to collect the palm fruit. The tree has many sharp spines on it, and the Yąnomamö use an ingenious device made of crossed poles to climb the tree. The climber stands on one pair of poles and lifts the other pair up the tree. Then he climbs to the upper pair and lifts the bottom pair up. In this way the tree is slowly ascended, and no thorns get stuck in the body.*

The grubs

are wrapped in small packages of leaves and placed in the hot coals to roast. They render down in the heat, yielding some liquid fat, which is licked off the leaves, and a soft, white body. I could never bring myself around to eat one, but an experienced missionary told me they tasted very much like bacon. But then I suppose that anything cooked in a smoky fire tastes like bacon.

The discarded seeds of palm fruits also get infected with much smaller grubs. The Yąnomamö break the hard seeds open with a rock, extract the grub, and prepare it in the above manner.

Some species of caterpillar are also eaten. They are not cleaned before cooking; the squirming insects are simply wrapped in leaves and thrown into the coals to roast.

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They have much less fat on them than grubs, and become dry and crunchy during the cooking, having a texture and form like cheese pone when prepared.

Large spiders are also collected; they are simply placed directly on the hot coals and roasted alive. The legs and thorax are eaten.

Another common insect food is the larvae of a species of large ant. Only the head of the squirming larvae is eaten. It is very crunchy and has a nutty taste, but one must exercise caution in eating them since they are equipped with sharp pincers and can inflict a painful wound on the tongue or lip.

The game animals are all shot with arrows. The curare palm points are usually used for monkey hunting, while the lanceolate bamboo points are used for large game, such as deer, tapir, and wild pigs. A third kind of point is used for birds. It consists of a long, slender stick to the end of which has been bound a splinter of gently curved monkey bone. This serves as the penetrating point and the barb; it is difficult to extract the point once the barb enters the animal.

The Yąnomamö also fashion a fourth kind of arrow point as they need it. It is simply a stick that has numerous twigs branching in a close cluster. The twigs are cut off an inch or so from the main branch, and the stem is inserted into the end of the arrow shaft that usually contains the curare-tipped point. This fourth type of point is used to kill small birds whose feathers are desired for decoration purposes. On one occasion I saw a young man fashion one of these points in a few seconds. He saw a small bird, located a shrub a few feet away, bit off a branch with his teeth, bit the twigs off, and stuck the point into his arrow shaft—without taking his eyes off the small bird for a second. This type of point is discarded after it serves its temporary purpose.

The Yąnomamö do not employ traps or compounds when hunting. They frequently use dogs to run tapir, pigs, and deer, but most hunting is merely the individual stalking and shooting whatever game is available. As men always carry their weapons with them when they leave the village, they are, in effect, hunting continuously. A communal type of hunting trip invariably precedes a feast; this is described in Chapter 4.

The technique for capturing armadillos is very interesting. Armadillos live in burrows deep underground, and the Yąnomamö are always investigating the entrances of these burrows to see if any signs of recent occupation can be found. If the burrow is occupied, the hunters quickly cover the entrance with combustible materials and start a fire. After the fire is blazing strongly, they find a dried termite nest, which produces large quantities of smoke, and put it onto the fire. When this is ignited, they fan the smoke into the burrow, cover the fire with sand, and look for other openings to the armadillo den. These are quickly spotted when smoke begins to emerge from them and covered with sand to keep the smoke in. Then the men crawl around with their ears held to the ground. The armadillo will sometimes start burrowing in order to escape the smoke; when he does, he is heard and his location immediately established. A stick is used to dig into the ground and find the animal, usually 2 or 3 feet below the surface. On one occasion the men had difficulty locating the animal and dug several holes without hitting the burrow. One of them then uncovered the entrance, obtained a thick vine from a nearby tree, and tied a knot in the end of it. He then introduced the knot into the burrow by spinning the vine rapidly between his hands, pushing it in gently as it twirled. When he could not get the vine to go any further, the men listened on the ground to locate the spinning knot. When they found it, they marked the spot. The vine was

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removed and laid along the ground in the direction of the burrow to measure the distance from the entrance. The men began digging at the end of the vine and located the asphyxiated armadillo on the first attempt.

The jungle provides many other kinds of foods and products too numerous to mention. Some, like vines and lianas, are very useful and commonly employed in basket-making; others, such as edible mushrooms, crabs, pigments, and decorative plant products, are less significant, and exploited only sporadically. Despite the amazing variety of food products to be found in the jungle, however, the Yąnomamö could not exist for any substantial period of time on collected foods only: they rely heavily on their cultivated crops. The tropical forest is much less productive and reliable than one would imagine. The most abundant foods, palm fruits, are seasonal—a group of people could only rely on them for a few months of the year, during which time some 80 group members would have to forage over a wide area to obtain sufficient palm fruits to keep everybody well fed.

Game animals are not abundant, and an area is rapidly hunted out, so that a group must keep constantly on the move. Furthermore, hunting depends as much on luck as it does on skill and is not a very reliable way to supply nourishment. I have gone on five-day hunting trips with the Yąnomamö in areas that had not been hunted for decades, and had we not brought cultivated foods along, we would have been extremely hungry at the end of this time—we did not collect even enough meat to feed ourselves. On other trips, we often managed to collect enough game in one day to feed the entire village.

GARDENING Although the Yąnomamö spend almost as much time hunting as they do gardening, the bulk of their diet comes from foods that are cultivated. Perhaps 85 percent or more of the diet consists of domesticated rather than wild foods—plantains are by far the most important food in the diet.

The Yąnomamö are constantly looking for potential garden sites. When I hunted with them, the topic of conversation that evening would eventually drift over to the merits of the area as a possible site for a new garden. Most new garden sites are, in fact, discovered by hunters.

The land for a new site should not be heavily covered with brush, which is difficult to remove. The larger trees should not be too numerous either, as it takes a good deal of work to chop them down. Ideally, the new site should have very light jungle cover, should be well drained, near a source of drinking water, and relatively free of thorny underbrush. The Yąnomamö call a garden *hikari täka;* jungle that has the potential of being a good garden is likewise called *hikari täka.*

The first operation in making a new garden is to cut the smaller trees and brush; the bigger trees, *kayaha hi,* are left standing until the underbrush is removed. Then the big trees are felled with axes and left lying on the ground to dry out in the sun.

My older informants claimed that they did not have steel tools when they were younger and had to kill the big trees by cutting a ring of bark off around the base of the stump, using a crude stone axe, piling brush around them, and burning them. The trees rarely fell, but the fire usually killed them, and their leaves dropped off, permitting the sunlight to reach the ground.

They also claimed that making a garden was more arduous in those days because a large area would have to be searched for the necessary quantities of kindling used to kill the big trees. Today, however, steel tools are quite common, being provided by the

244 [177] [252] [799] Many of the Yąnomamö villages have recently obtained bitter manioc, a poisonous variety that must be leached of its toxic ingredient before it can be eaten. This variety is grown in large quantities by the Carib-speaking Makiritare Indians-and by rural Venezuelans-and most of it has been introduced to the Yąnomamö recently by missionaries. Where the Yąnomamö are in direct contact with the Makiritare, they have, of course, adopted the crop without the intervention of the missionaries.

Next in importance are three other root crops: taro, sweet potatoes, and mapuey. [252] All of these resemble potatoes; they are usually boiled, but occasionally they are roasted directly over the coals.

245 [423] The Yąnomamö also cultivate a species of palm tree that produces a large crop of fruit each February and a much smaller crop in June. Each tree is owned by the individual who planted it, and his rights to the fruit continue even after the garden has been abandoned. It takes about six or seven years for a newly planted tree to produce its first crop, so the Yąnomamö are quite reluctant to move very far away from sites where they possess producing groves of these trees. When they do move, they return each year to collect the peach-palm fruit. They try, as well, to move to an abandoned garden that still has producing peach palms. If thieves have been raiding the unguarded crop, the Yąnomamö may cut the trees down, keeping the wood to make bows. They would sooner destroy an item of personal property than permit others to exploit it without permission.

243 [262] Maize is probably next in importance, but in a special sense. It appears to be cultivated as an emergency crop because its seeds are light and easily transported. A group that must move its garden a long distance can carry large quantities of maize seed and produce a substantial crop in a relatively short period of time. Maize does not, however, under normal circumstances, figure prominently in the daily diet of the Yąnomamö.

Cane for arrow manufacturing is also grown. The mature plant consists of a long, slender, pithy cane that has no joints or branches and is ideally suited for arrow shafts. The Yąnomamö use the cane just as they harvest it. Their arrows are over 6 feet long. Wing feathers from the larger species of wild turkey are used to fletch the arrow. On [237] each side of the shaft, one feather is tied with finely spun cotton fibers, being attached in such a way that the arrow will spin when it is released; its accuracy is thus improved in the way a bullet's accuracy is improved by rifling in a gun barrel. A nock is carved [322] from wood with an agouti-tooth knife; it looks very much like a golf-ball tee when finished, except that it is grooved at the large end where it will be fitted to the bowstring. [314] The nock is inserted in the narrow end of the cane and held fast with pitch adhesive and [284] a tight wrapping of fine cotton thread. The large end of the cane is not altered if it is to take a curare tip, since it tapers to a fine point and, therefore, blends into the thin curare point. If the point to be mounted is of the lanceolate type, the tip of the cane is cut off at its maximum diameter, wrapped with heavy cord, and the point jammed into the cane pith with considerable force. The fiber wrapping prevents the cane from splitting while the point is being mounted. The finished product is a very handsome [531] piece of work, and the Yąnomamö are proud of their arrows. They decorate the bamboo points by painting them red and adding black designs, and they attach a few colorful [422] feathers to the fletched end. A seasoned arrow is a prized possession, in high demand in [437] the trading network.

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men built his own section of the village, but in such a way that the roofs coincided and could be attached by simply extending the thatching. When completed, the village looked like a continuous, oval-shaped lean-to because of the way in which the roofs of the discrete houses were attached. Each house, however, is owned by the family that built it. Sharaiwä, Kąobawä's youngest brother, helped build Kąobawä's house and shares it with him. He also shares Koamashima, Kąobawä's younger wife. Kąobawä's older wife, Bahimi, hangs her hammock adjacent to Kąobawä's most of the time, but when there are visitors and the village is crowded, she ties her hammock under his in order to be able to tend the fire during the night. Ariwari still sleeps with his mother, but will get his own hammock soon: He is nearly four years old. His parents are afraid he will fall into the fire at night and get burned, since he is still a little too young to sleep alone.[21]

Daily activities begin early in a Yąnomamö village. One can hear people chatting lazily and children crying long before it is light enough to see. Most people are waked by the cold and build up the fire just before daybreak. They usually go back to sleep, but many of them visit and talk about their plans for the day.

The entrances are all covered with dry brush so that any movement of people through them is heard all over the village. There is always a procession of people leaving the village at dawn to relieve themselves in the nearby garden, and the noise they make going in and out of the village usually awakens the others.

The village is very smoky at this time of day, since the newly stoked campfires smoulder before they leap into flames. The air is usually very still and chilly, and the ground is damp from the dew. The smoke is pleasant and seems to drive away the coolness.

Clandestine sexual liasons usually take place at this time of day, having been arranged on the previous evening. The lovers leave the village on the pretext of going to the bathroom and meet at some predetermined location. They return to the village by opposite routes.

This is also the time of day when raiders strike, so people must be cautious when they leave the village at dawn. If there is some reason to suspect raiders, they do not leave the confines of the upright log palisade that surrounds the village. They wait instead until full light and leave the village in armed groups.

By the time it is light enough to see, everybody has started preparing breakfast. This consists largely of roasted green plantains, easily prepared and steaming hot. If the family has any meat, it is taken down and shared, the children getting the best portions. Leftover meat is hung over the fire by a vine to keep the vermin off it and to preserve it.

If any of the men have made plans to hunt that day, they leave the village before it is light. Wild turkeys can be easily taken at this time of day because they roost in conspicuous places. During the dry season the *bashimo* (a kind of grouse) sing before dark and can be readily located. If any were heard the night before, the men leave at dawn to stalk them.

Tobacco chewing starts as soon as people begin stirring. Those who have fresh

[21] A child fell into a fire and burned to death in 1966—the mother had placed her hammock too close to the fire in order to keep warm, and the baby slipped from her arms while she slept. Bahimi's mother also sleeps in Kąobawä's house, but he does not have to avoid her because she is an old woman.

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drugs take effect. This usually lasts for an hour or so, after which the men bathe to wash the vomit or nasal mucus off their bodies. Kaobawĩ does not participate in the drug-taking, as he finds it unpleasant. Most of the men, however, do take drugs and enjoy doing it, despite the associated unpleasantries of vomiting and the pain that follows the blast of air as the powder is blown deeply into the nasal passages.

Whatever the men do for the afternoon, however, the women invariably search for firewood and haul immense, heavy loads of it to their houses just before dark.

Fig. 3–8. Boys shooting tiny arrows into a lizard they have captured. The lizard is tied to a string and allowed to run around the village while the boys gleefully chase it. Here they have wounded it and are about to fill it full of arrows.

The biggest meal of the day is prepared in the evening. The staple is plantains, but frequently other kinds of food are available after the day's activities. Meat is always the most desirable food and is always considered to be in short supply. It is a happy occasion when one of the hunters bags a tapir, for everyone gets a large share of it.

It is good to share meat with others. This attitude is expressed in the sentiment that a hunter should give away most of the game he kills. One of the obligations men take very seriously is providing adequate quantities of meat for their wives and children. They genuinely abhor hearing their children cry for meat; this calls into question their abilities as hunters and marksmen, both of which are associated with prestige. Rerebawĩ, for example, collected a large supply of game on one trip we took together. He gave it all to his wife and children and to his wife's parents. At the evening meal he refused to

At the evening meal he refused to take a portion of the meat so that the others could have more. Later in the evening, he appeared at my hut begging for a can of sardines to satisfy his hunger for meat. He preferred to go hungry rather than risk the onus of being accused of poor marksmanship or stinginess.

Both sexes participate in the cooking, although the women do the greater share of it. Food preparation is not elaborate and rarely requires much labor, time, or paraphernalia. Spices are never used, although the salty ashes of a particular kind of tree are sometimes mixed with water to form a condiment of sorts. The food is dunked into the salty liquid and eaten.

Everyone eats in his hammock using his fingers for utensils. Some meals cannot be eaten from a reclining position, so the members of the family squat in a circle around the common dish. For example, large quantities of tiny fish are cooked by wrapping them in leaves and cooking them in the hot coals. When the fish are done, the package is spread open, and everyone shares its contents.

Animals are never skinned before cooking. They are merely put over the fire after their entrails have been removed, and roasted, head, fur, claws, and all. Most of the fur is singed off in the process of cooking. The animal is dismembered by hand. The head, particularly the head of a monkey, is highly prized because the brain is considered a delicacy. The most common meat is monkey, of which there are several varieties, so that this delicacy is enjoyed rather frequently by the Yąnomamö.

By the time supper is over it is nearly dark. The fires are prepared for the evening; if someone has allowed his own fire to go out during the day, he simply borrows two glowing sticks from a neighbor and rekindles his own hearth. The entrances to the village are sealed off with dry brush so that prowlers can not enter without raising an alarm. Before retiring to their hammocks, the Yąnomamö first sit on them and wipe the bottoms of their bare feet together. This rubs off most of the debris that has accumulated on them during the course of the day. Everyone sleeps naked and as close to the fire as possible. Despite the inevitable last-minute visiting, things are usually quiet in the village by the time it is dark.

Things are not always quiet after dark. If anyone in the village is sick, a shaman will chant to the malevolent spirits most of the night to exorcise them. Or, should anyone be mourning a dead kinsman, he or she will sob and wail long after the others have fallen asleep. Occasionally, a fight will break out between a husband and wife, and soon everybody in the village will be screaming, expressing opinions on the dispute. The shouting may continue sporadically for hours, dying down only to break out anew as someone gets a fresh insight into the problem. Once in a while someone gives a long, loud speech voicing his opinion on the world in general. Those who are interested may add their own comments, but the audience usually grumbles about the noise and falls asleep.

Status Differences and Activities

Daily activities, except those concerning gardening and visiting, do not vary much from season to season. Much of the variation that does occur is a function of one's age or sex, as was shown above.

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a local shortage of the item in order to have to rely on an ally for it, giving sufficient cause to visit them.

Often the specialization is less individualized than in the case of clay pot manufacture. Kaobawä's group, for example, exports cotton yarn to one ally, but imports it from another. The exported cotton frequently is brought back in the form of manufactured hammocks, the importer merely contributing labor to the process. In some cases the shortages are merely seasonal; Kaobawä's group may import cotton from a particular ally at one time of the year, but export it at another. Most of the trade, however, involves items that are readily manufactured by or raised by any group, underscoring the fact that trade is the stimulus to visit. Food does not enter the trading system, although hospitality dictates that it must be given to friendly groups. Occasionally, a village will run short of plantains because of a particularly long hot spell, and its members may visit an ally to borrow food to last a week or so. This hospitality is usually reciprocated, but it is not a part of the trading network.

Alliances between villages may stabilize at any one of three points: sporadic reciprocal trading, mutual feasting, or reciprocal women exchange. These are cumulative levels in the sense that the third phase implies the first two: Allies that exchange women also feast and trade with each other. Likewise, allies that merely feast together also trade, but do not exchange women. At the lower end of this scale of solidarity lie those villages with which one fights to kill, while at the upper end are those villages from whom one's group has recently separated. Frequently, the scale is circular rather than linear: A village's mortal enemy is the group from which it has recently split. By way of example, Kaobawä's group trades sporadically with the Makorima-teri, Daiyari-teri, Widokaiya-teri, Mahekodo-teri, and Iyawei-teri. These are fairly weak alliances and even permit limited fighting. His group has more intimate ties with the Reyaboböwei-teri and Mõmariböwei-teri, with whom it feasts regularly. The alliance with the Reyaboböwei-teri has even reached the point at which they are exchanging women with each other. Finally, at the other end of the scale, Kaobawä's group is at war with the Iwahikoroba-teri, Möwarioba-teri, and Patanowä-teri. The first two of these groups are historically unrelated to Kaobawä's group, although they have a common history with two of his staunchest allies, the Reyaboböwei-teri and Mõmaribowei-teri, from whom they separated in the past. The Patanowä-teri are related to Kaobawä and his followers, as was shown in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, they are bitter enemies and are at present raiding each other.

Although there is no rigid geographical correlation of the village settlement pattern to the degree of alliance solidarity, neighboring villages usually are at least on trading terms and are not actively conducting war on each other. Should war develop between neighbors, one of the two principals will abandon its site and move to a new location. Whether the ties between neighboring villages will be one of blood, marriage exchange, reciprocal feasting, or casual trading depends on a large number of factors, particularly on village size, current warfare situation with respect to more distant groups, and the precise historical ties between the neighboring villages. Whatever the nature of the ties beween neighbors, each strives to maintain its sovereignty and independence from the others.

The Yanomamö do not openly regard trade as a mechanism the ulterior function of which is to bring people repeatedly together, thus establishing an amicable basis from

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neutral. The treacherous feast for their Shamatari enemies proved to be unsuccessful: The intended victims had accepted the invitation, but were informed of the plot just before they arrived. One of the Reyaboböwei-teri who had close kinsmen among them had misgivings about the matter and warned them.

Late in the afternoon it was learned that the Mahekodo-teri were, in fact, in the vicinity of the village, allegedly on a "camping trip." Kąobawä, of course, suspected their story, but to demonstrate his friendship he invited them to be his guests at a feast. As he and his men had been away for nearly two weeks, there was an abundance of food in their gardens and they could easily afford to entertain the Mahekodo-teri and their traveling companions, the Boreta-teri. Together, the guests numbered about 100—after they fetched their women and children.

This sets the stage for the feast in the kind of context that makes it more intelligible: The specific historical relationships between the participants and the nature of their mutual mistrust. Now I will give the details of the events that followed.

The Feast

Perhaps because he suspected the Mahekodo-teri and Boreta-teri of intimidation, Kąobawä also invited the Karohi-teri to attend the feast. They are a small but dependable ally and had themselves separated from the Mahekodo-teri many years ago. This established a balance of power at the projected feast should any trouble arise, for the combination of both Boreta-teri and Mahekodo-teri was of sufficient strength to worry any host. With the aid of the Karohi-teri, Kąobawä's group was more of a match for the visitors.

The feast started out on a sour note. It is the custom of the Yąnomamö visitors to arrive only after an invitation from their hosts, sent by messenger on the day of the feast. The Mahekodo-teri and Boreta-teri, however, arrogantly arrived nearly a week before Kąobawä's group was prepared to receive them and set up a large, temporary camp a short distance from the village. They were guests and could legitimately demand to be fed. Because of this, Kąobawä and his covillagers were under obligation to feed them, some hundred or so people, and took them to the gardens to supply them with enough plantains to last a week. Kąobawä was a little disturbed that they would be so impolite as to arrive uninvited, but took the situation quite philosophically. After all, they had fed his group for the better part of a year.

He and several other men cut a large quantity of plantains, which were hung in his house and allowed to ripen for a week, to be boiled into *date*, a thick, sweet soup, on the day of the feast. That afternoon Kąobawä and a few of the older men commissioned a hunting party comprised of young men, several of whom were Kąobawä's brothers, whose responsibility would be to obtain a large quantity of fresh meat to give to the visitors on the day after the feast. Most of them were reluctant to go, as their feet were still sore from the trip to the Shamatari village. A few of them claimed to be sick and managed to escape recruitment into the hunting party in this way. This hunt, with the hanging of the plantains in the headman's house, initiated the feast. The excitement that usually attends a feast began at this time.

That evening the young men danced and sang in the village, an institution called *amoamo*, thereby insuring themselves with luck on the hunt. (The Yąnomamö also

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amoamo on other occasions, but invariably do so on the day the plantains are hung in the village in anticipation of a feast.) Every evening the men are away on their *boniomou*, the week-long hunt, the young women and girls sing and dance in the village to insure them success.

The hunters left at dawn the following morning, carrying a large supply of roasted and green plantains with them to eat while they hunted. They had picked a site some 25 miles up the Mavaca River for their hunt, as game was known to abound there. Their task was to obtain monkeys, armadillos, wild turkeys, wild pig, tapir or sloth, the only meat deemed worthy to give to guests. They would not be permitted to eat any of this game, but could consume any other game they captured, such as deer, small birds, a small species of wild turkey, or insects and fish they happened to come upon. The feast meat, however, was earmarked for the guests and could not be eaten by the hunters. On this particular hunting trip the men miscalculated the amount of food they would need to sustain them during the hunt, and one of them returned after four days to fetch more plantains. He also gave Kąobawä a report on the hunt's success, creating a small sensation in the village: They had already killed a large number of *hasbo*, a particularly large and very desirable monkey. They had also come upon a quantity of turtle eggs at a sand bar and were eating as many as they could. When they returned later, they cached the remaining eggs in my house, so as not to have to share them with the visitors.

Meanwhile, the visitors were making gluttons of themselves, and the hosts started to grumble about the large number of plantains they had already eaten. The week's supply they originally provided had been consumed in half that time, and the guests had been given permission a second time to harvest more from their hosts' gardens. This was no way for guests to behave, and it soon became apparent that they were intimidating Kąobawä's group. Still, he and his followers continued to supply them with all the food they needed, keeping their complaints to themselves. They did not want it to be known that they were worried about running short of food. Instead, they planned to conduct the feast on a scale that would be difficult to reciprocate.

The hunters returned and presented their catch to Kąobawä. It was brought to his house and placed on the ground, wrapped up in leaves. Kąobawä ignored it for a while and then slowly began to unpack it (see Fig. 4-1) while everybody watched—especially the hunters, who were quite proud of the quantity of meat they had obtained: seventeen *hasbo* monkeys, seven wild turkeys, and three large armadillos. Hunting trips are not usually this successful, but the hunters had fortunately stumbled into a large band of *hasbo* and had nearly wiped it out.

Kąobawä and his group were anxious to conduct the feast for their visitors and present them with the food, because by so doing the visitors would be obliged to leave for home, thereby ending the drain on the gardens.[2]

The feast was scheduled for the day following the return of the hunters, even though the Karohi-teri had not yet arrived. Kąobawä and his group were so anxious to rid themselves of their ravenous guests by this time that they decided to hold a separate feast for the Karohi-teri on the day following the departure of the Mahekodo-teri. This would involve a considerable amount of extra work, but they were more than willing to

[2] I have seen several instances of Yąnomamö groups getting rid of visitors who have joined them semipermanently by holding a feast in their honor; when the ceremonial food is presented, the visitors are obliged to leave.

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undertake it if it meant getting rid of their first group of visitors, who, by this time, had spent nearly a week eating Kaobawä's produce.

On the morning of the feast three large pieces of bark from the *araparu* tree were cut and brought to the village. These were made into troughs to contain the boiled, ripe plantain soup. All day long Kaobawä's younger brothers, who had returned from the hunt the day before, labored at cooking the enormous quantity of ripe plantains, pouring each boiling containerful into the trough as it was prepared.[3]

The plantains that Kaobawä had hung in his *shabono* roof a week before were now ripe. The young men who were preparing the soup would cut the bunches of plantains from the roof, split each fruit with their thumb, throw the two halves of the flesh into a cooking pot, and toss the skins onto a pile. They worked at this task from early morning until late afternoon, in addition to boiling a nearly equal quantity of green plantains, which provided the green vegetable food that customarily accompanies the presentation of meat. Yanomamö etiquette dictates that meat must be accompanied by vegetable food and vice versa.[4] It is an insult, for example, to offer someone meat without simultaneously offering a vegetable food with it. Peeling green plantains is a little more difficult than peeling ripe ones, which are very tough and brittle. The Yanomamö solve this problem, like they solve so many others, by using their teeth. Each plantain is bitten along its length several times, cracking the peel, which in turn is removed with the fingernails and further application of the dentition. On this particular occasion, two young men peeled, with their thumbs, enough ripe plantains to make approximately 95 gallons of soup, and, with their teeth, a sufficiently large quantity of green plantains to fill a dozen large pack-baskets.

In the morning on the day of the feast, Kaobawä went to the center of the village clearing where all could see him and proceeded to pull weeds. The clearing has to look presentable to the visitors, as it functions as the dancing plaza. As noted before, since Yanomamö headmen cannot directly order their followers to execute tasks such as these, they usually initiate them and hope that others will follow. By and by, a number of older men joined him, as well as a few women, and when a sufficient number of workers were pulling weeds and hauling them out, Kaobawä quietly retired to his hammock, from which he oversaw the food preparations and calculated the distribution of meat.

Excitement in the village grew conspicuously as the hours passed, and by noon there was a constant din of laughter and chatter, punctuated now and then with a shrill scream from some young man overcome with the thrill of the feast. Occasionally, the visitors would reply to the shouts, setting off a brief contest of screaming between hosts

[3]Kaobawä's group has access to aluminum pots now and uses them extensively in food preparations. Most Yanomamö groups still use crude clay pots, although these are being rapidly replaced by aluminum ware, which is traded inland to the more remote villages.

[4]The three vegetable foods considered to be suitable accompaniments for the meat presentation are: boiled green plantains, boiled *ruaka* fruit, and cassava bread. A number of missionaries and a few scientific observers have identified the Yanomamö feast strongly with the *ruaka* fruit (Zerries 1953; de Barandiaran 1966). If it is to be identified with any food, it should be called the "plantain feast," but to identify the feast with a food that sometimes (*ruaka*) or invariably (plantains) accompanies it is to overlook the sociopolitical causes of the feast. *Ruaka* is so unnecessary to the feast that it was served at only two of six feasts I attended. In short, the Yanomamö feast is a social and political event, not a harvest ceremony, and occurs independently of the abundance or availability of *ruaka* fruit. *Ruaka* fruit ripens in February, the peak of the dry season. It is only in the dry season that feasts can be held, because travel is difficult or impossible at other times of the year. The correlation of the ripening of *ruaka* and feasting is rather more fortuitous than causal.

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the visiting dancers entered, pranced around the village periphery, wildly showing off their decorations and weapons and then returning to the group. Each dancer had unique decorations and a unique dance step, something personal that he could exhibit. He would burst into the village screaming a memorized phrase, wheel and spin, stop in his tracks, dance in place, throw his weapons down, pick them up again, aim them at the line of hosts with a wild expression on his face, prance ahead a few steps, repeat his performance, and continue on around the village in this manner, while the hosts cheered wildly. When everyone had had an individual turn, the entire group entered, danced single file around the periphery several times, and gathered at the center of the clearing, where they formed a tightly knit group. They stood motionless, except for the heaving of their chests, holding their weapons vertically. After they had stood there a few moments—in a final display of decorations—Kąobawä's followers emerged from their houses and approached the center of the village, each man inviting one or more of the visitors to his house, leading him away from the village center by the arm. As each visitor was led away, his family, watching from the village entrance, unceremoniously joined him at the host's house, bringing the family possessions along. Within a few minutes the dance plaza was deserted and the visitors were resting comfortably in their hosts' hammocks. Even in the hammocks, the Yąnomamö visitors are able to put on a silent display of their finery as they lay with their legs crossed, one arm behind their head, staring at the ceiling, waiting for their hosts to feed them ripe plantain soup from the bark troughs—it is almost as if they are strutting from a reclining position.

After the guests had been given their first round of soup, the men of Kąobawä's village assembled outside the entrance and came in to dance around the village for their guests. They, too, had an opportunity to put on a display of their own decorations, after which they retired to entertain the guests.

There were three troughs full of soup in the village. The first one was emptied in the process of bringing numerous gourdsful to the some one hundred visitors (see Fig. 4–2). After they had consumed this, the guests then assembled at the second trough and began eating there. Before this trough was finished, they moved as a group to the third trough and repeated their ceremonial consumption, before returning to their hammocks to rest and regain their appetites. Approximately two hours had passed from the time the first dancers entered the village until the guests retired from the third trough of soup. They had not yet eaten all of the contents—all in all, some 95 gallons of it—but managed to do so by morning.[6]

Shortly after dark the marathon chanting (*unïyamou*) began—it continued until dawn. At dawn the visitors conducted their trade and were given the baskets of "going-home food": boiled green plantains with smoked meat. The women and children departed with the food, leaving the men behind to trade. The visitors made requests through their headman, and Kąobawä would produce the item by enjoining one of the local men to give it. The item would be thrown at the feet of the man who wanted it. He would ignore it for a while and then give it a cursory examination, throwing it back on the ground. His peers would then examine it in greater detail and extol its virtues, while the

[6]During some feasts, the ashes of the dead are mixed with the boiled, ripe plantain soup and eaten by friends and relatives of the deceased. The feast also serves as a preliminary to a raid that involves two or more villages. The sponsor of the raid will entertain his allies in a feast the day before the raiding party departs. See Chapter X for a discussion of the raid.

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giver would apologize for its defects. If it were a particularly poor item, just the opposite would occur; the giver would cite its not-so-obvious merits, while the recipient would draw attention to the conspicuous shortcomings. In every trade the hosts always feel as though they had been over generous, and the guests, after they depart, complain that they had not received enough. The trade was conducted in an atmosphere of efficiency, with very little argumentation. The hosts had concealed their choicest items and vigorously denied having some goods, and the guests had done likewise—sinking their prize bows in a river before arriving at feast, for example, and bringing an inferior one along in case one of the hosts asked for it during the trading. As this was the first time in some years that the two groups feasted together, there was nothing for either one to repay. Instead, the visitors asked for items *to mruiba*—to be repaid later—and the guests did the same

Fig. 4-2. Guests drinking boiled ripe plantain soup at a feast; the trough is made from the bark of a large tree, atapuri.

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Bisaasi-teri, for example, wanted to get rid of the Monou-teri, they would hold a feast in their honor. When the going-home food was presented to them, they had no alternative but to leave. It would have been insulting to remain after the food was presented. In between their moves they returned to their own producing site to collect plantains and carry them to their new garden. They subsisted there off the food they carried with them.

The Monou-teri soon resented being treated like pariahs by their allies and began to regain their courage. Much of this treatment was due to the fact that they failed to chase the raiders when Damowä was slain, displaying cowardice instead of ferocity. Many of the men in the Bisaasi-teri groups resented the Monou-teri for this and were not timid about displaying their disgust. The Monou-teri were a burden, as they rarely helped at expanding Bisaasi-teri's gardens and ate a good deal of the time.

The raid Kąobawä organized to revenge Damowä's death took place late in April. The Shamatari allies—Mǫmariböwei-teri and Reyaböwei-teri—were invited to participate, but they failed to send a contingency. As allies never really trust each other, the raid was delayed because some of the Bisaasi-teri suspected that their allies were waiting for the raiders to leave so that they could descend on the poorly protected women and make off with captives. Finally, a few of them did arrive and the *waryu itou* (warrior line-up) got under way. Still, the Bisaasi-teri feared treachery on the part of their Shamatari friends, so the men of Lower Bisaasi-teri decided to stay home and protect the women left behind by the Monou-teri and Upper Bisaasi-teri raiders. A small feast was held to entertain the visiting Shamatari allies.

On the afternoon of the feast a grass dummy was set up in the village, and the men who were to participate in the raid conducted a mock attack on the dummy, which was supposed to represent the body of a Patanowä-teri man. They painted themselves black, crept slowly around the village with bows and arrows ready, searching for the tracks of the enemy. They converged at one point, spread out, crept toward the dummy, and, at Kąobawä's signal, let fly with a volley of arrows. The Yąnomamö are good archers. None of the arrows missed its mark, and the dummy, looking like a pincushion, toppled ominously to the ground, a dozen or more bamboo-tipped arrows protruding from it. Then the raiders screamed and ran out of the village, simulating their retreat from the enemy. They drifted back into the village, one at a time or in small groups, and retired to their hammocks to wait for darkness.

The village became unusually quiet shortly after dark. Suddenly, the stillness was pierced by an animal-like noise, half-scream and half-growl, as the first raider marched slowly out to the center of the village, clacking his arrows against his bow, growling his individualized fierce noise, usually a mimic of a carnivore: a wasp, or a buzzard. At this signal—not knowing fully what to expect and a little nervous—I crept from my own hammock and went to the center of the village with my tape recorder. The other raiders joined the first man, coming one at a time after short intervals, each clacking his arrows and growling some hideous noise. Kąobawä stood by and made sure the line was straight and faced the direction of the enemy; he would push or pull the individual warriors until they formed a perfectly straight line, joining them after the last one took his place.

The procession to the line-up took about twenty minutes, as about 30 or so men participated (see Fig. 5-2). When the last one was in line, the murmurs among the